

Veterans Affairs

changes that have occurred in the past decade or more, I do not believe those concepts and legislative provisions are relevant today—particularly when the principal, if not the only, desire of veterans is to use the act as a means of acquiring a retirement home, mainly in urban areas.

It is really unnecessary for me to point out that such use is inconsistent with the purpose and intent of the legislation, as well as being irrational in relation to the premises on which the financial provisions of the act were developed. In all the circumstances, Madam Speaker, and after the most serious further study of this matter, I wish to state that it is not the intention of the government to introduce amendments to extend the lending deadlines which are contained in the Veterans' Land Act.

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. MacDonald (Cardigan): I expressed the view a moment ago that an urban housing program for veterans who have reached or are approaching retirement from post-war careers is inconsistent with an agriculturally-oriented rehabilitation program which was designed to assist veterans following their discharge from wartime active service. This is not to say that many low or modest income veterans do not have needs in respect of housing. On the contrary, it is realized that many do and that their requirements or preferences are varied in nature. It is in recognition of that awareness, and of the greater relevancy of the provisions of the National Housing Act to those needs, that a study has been undertaken to examine whether special arrangements should be made to assist such veterans. Because discussions are still in process, I am not in a position to comment further at this time. I am hopeful, however, that it will be possible for me to do so in the not too distant future.

Mr. Forrestall: Why don't you extend it until the study is completed?

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order. Before recognizing the hon. member, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner)—Immigration—The consequences of expulsion from Canada of Haitians—The attitude of the minister; the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. Hogan)—The Canadian economy—Maritime provinces—Alleged gloomy economic forecast by Public Works Department—Participation by Department of Regional Economic Expansion; the hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser)—Urban affairs—Land assembly—Request for measures to assist municipalities retain green spaces.

[Mr. MacDonald (Cardigan).]

● (1650)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

VETERANS' LAND ACT

REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF TERMINAL DATE OF PROGRAM

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):

That this House calls on the Minister of Veterans Affairs to review the terminal date of March 31, 1975, now specified in the Veterans' Land Act, and to report thereon to the House within the time limit set out in chapter 3 of the Statutes of 1974.

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): Madam Speaker, I should like to congratulate the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) for their excellent presentations and for the hard work they have done on behalf of Canada's war veterans in the past several years. I do not intend to speak at great length. I am sure the legitimacy of my views will be demonstrated by the large number of hon. members who share them. First, I would like to say that I am thankful for the opportunity to speak on this issue and grateful to my colleagues who have reopened this debate, for they appreciate the necessity for changes in the current legislation. And changes there must be, not only to the terminal date of March 31, 1975, but also to a number of other limitations in the bill. One change by itself would be useless.

First of all, if the intent of the act is to assist veterans in settling and building a house in Canada today, then the land size requirements and the limits on loans are ridiculous. The Canadian who can buy half an acre of land and erect an inhabitable dwelling on it for \$18,000 would be unique, and awfully lucky, in view of the tremendous rise in building materials' and all other costs in the last six years under this government, a government that is apparently set against an increase in the loan ceiling for our veterans. Past members of the Canadian armed forces, even if trained in the area of real estate to the degree the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Richardson) envisages for present members of the forces, would find this an impossible task.

There is evidence of this fact in the 5 per cent over-all decrease in new house construction in the last fiscal year, compared to the previous year, and the 25 per cent reduction in Ontario. Suitable land cannot be found. The lot requirement of half an acre must be lowered to a reasonable size in relation to today's needs and land prices.

When one considers the unprecedented inflation rate prevalent since the last loan limit increase, I do not think there can be a case argued against raising this limit substantially. In order to stay in step with today's costs, I believe a ceiling of \$30,000 is much more reasonable than the present limit and is, in fact, very necessary.

One of the main reasons for there being such a large number of veterans who have not applied for loans under the Veterans' Land Act is the simple fact that the terms were much too limiting for many of them to take advan-