

Veterans Affairs

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):—if it were not a firm ruling, that we could argue the point. Your Honour has stated it is a firm ruling, and we accept it without question.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: C. D. Howe.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): There was no intent to provoke or to challenge the Chair, but merely to seek an opportunity to argue the question if the issue were still open.

An hon. Member: Better get the "blues," John.

Mr. Speaker, we have noted, especially since the beginning of this session, the behaviour of parliamentary secretaries who try more and more to ask questions during that period traditionally allotted to the members of the opposition.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Laprise: It is so true, Mr. Speaker, that on several occasions, some government members have asked Social Crediters to put questions to the ministers, so that they could make statements which the opposition members would not have to answer.

[*English*]

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, March 28, 1974, this House had before it what was then known as Bill C-17, which is now chapter 3 of the Statutes of 1974, the effect of which was to extend for one year the period under which grants could be sought under the Veterans' Land Act. In closing his brief speech on second reading of that bill, the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald) said, as recorded at page 948 of *Hansard*:

I believe, Mr. Speaker, this extension will provide many veterans with the opportunity to take advantage of a program which was designed for them.

I draw attention to this final sentence of the minister's speech:

It should be made quite clear that we are not doing this as a favour to veterans but simply as a right which they have earned.

That statement of the Minister of Veterans Affairs sets out clearly the whole purpose of the debate which will take place today and, possibly, tomorrow. The purpose of this debate is to persuade the minister to stand by that statement, namely, that the provisions of the Veterans' Land Act are a right which veterans have earned. Perhaps, to be more precise, the purpose of this debate is to persuade the government to back the minister on what I believe is his belief, namely, that the provisions of the Veterans' land Act should be continued.

This is an unusual debate. It does not often happen that there is a debate on the floor of the House because an act of parliament provides that such debate shall take place. I would not contend that this is the first time in history it has happened, for—

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

VETERANS' LAND ACT

REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF TERMINAL DATE OF PROGRAM

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre) moved:

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. Speaker: Is the hon. member rising on a question of privilege?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

During the debate, I tried several times to be recognized in order to express my opinion on this important matter.

This discussion does not surprise me, because since the beginning of this session, especially, we have often heard—please note, Mr. Speaker, that I particularly wish to express my view on the matter raised by the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Guay). I want to make it clear that I am entitled as much as anybody else to speak in this House.

[Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton).]