

For one thing, Mr. Speaker, we will have to look for a much greater attempt at decentralization than seems to be the intention of the minister. We have been told that the members of the Parole Board will be distributed across the country instead of being confined to the national capital. But we have to wonder if this decentralization will be as thorough-going a reorganization of the board as we might have hoped. And we have to wonder whether the decentralization of the board, distributing its members to various regional centres, will be a thorough-going decentralization by which each regional centre will have sufficient autonomy to do its work properly.

One of the things that has impressed me on visiting penitentiaries throughout the country and discussing the situation with staff members as well as inmates has been the feeling of alienation that can be found on the part of officers and guards and other staff members in our institutions, a feeling of alienation which I dare say afflicts the parole system as well, a feeling of alienation that I think can only be treated properly when we begin thoroughly to decentralize our system and give each of the regional centres adequate authority to function more or less on its own.

At the present time, the authority is almost entirely restricted to Ottawa, and there is great difficulty in transmitting the edicts and policy decisions of top officials to those who have to carry them out in the local institutions. It is for that reason that we need decentralization. I am really at a loss to know whether the intention of the minister, in calling for the appointment of these ten ad hoc members, is to have that kind of thorough-going decentralization or not.

One can suspect that while board members will be put here and there, the reins will still be so tightly held within Ottawa's hands that there will not be very much change involved. So once again we come back to this fundamental question: are we just going to have more of the same, or are we going to have something sufficiently different that we can look forward to a parole system that will be a credit to this country, that will express the humanitarian ideals of its people, administered in such a way that there is a realistic appraisal of danger and violence, and that there is a proper balance of rehabilitation with restraint?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I regret interrupting the hon. member, but the time allotted to him has expired. However, he may continue if there is unanimous consent. Is this agreed?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Stackhouse:** Mr. Speaker, I think that the bill before us, discussed and studied as it has been by many concerned members in the House and in the committee, has indicated the sense of responsibility which we have as representatives of people from various parts of the country. Because of the maladministration of the parole system in recent years, a cloud has developed over parole and there has been great concern that there be adequate reform of the administration of parole in Canada, a concern that I do not think has been properly provided for in this legislation. Certainly we on this side of the House are prepared to support the bill, but we would like to have

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some straight and constructive answers from the minister to the serious questions which we have put to him, answers which we have not yet received.

Mr. Speaker, may I call it ten o'clock?

## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

### VETERANS AFFAIRS—LAND ACT REGULATIONS RESPECTING ACQUISITION OF SMALL HOLDINGS

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, it is not an accident, it is not a coincidence, that the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) and I both have questions for this "late show" period tonight with respect to the Veterans Land Act. It is quite deliberate on our part, for we both feel very strongly about the issue and we hope that by giving the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald) two chances to answer our questions we will get the right answers.

Perhaps I might say that it is not without significance that in these 20 minutes the three of us who have the floor are a Progressive Conservative—and in the case of the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe I emphasize the "progressive"—the Minister of Veterans Affairs, who I hope is a liberal Liberal and in my case a New Democrat, with emphasis on the "new". Together we demonstrate the concern of all hon. members for the welfare of our veterans.

On Friday, November 9, as recorded in *Hansard* at page 7693, this House unanimously passed a motion which I had the privilege of moving, seconded by the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe. That motion read as follows:

That this House requests that the Minister of Veterans Affairs give urgent consideration to the amending of the Veterans Land Act regulations to permit veterans to acquire small holdings, even if the main purpose of most of the older veterans now applying for loans under the Veterans Land Act is to meet their housing requirements, it being the view of this House that entitlement to a piece of this land ought to be the right of any veteran.

Some days later, on Wednesday, November 21, I put a question to the Minister of Veterans Affairs in which I referred to the motion which had been passed on November 9 and asked whether he was yet in a position to report to the House on the request made in that motion. The hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe had a supplementary question on that occasion, and so here we are tonight, the three of us. My friend and I have divided the field a bit. I wish to concentrate on the position that has been taken quite often by the minister, to the effect that VLA is not for housing. He spelled this out quite fully on November 6 when he was responding to another question of my friend from Newfoundland. I will quote in particular a paragraph on page 7605 of *Hansard* where the minister said: