

Supply—Veterans Affairs

with the province of New Brunswick and the Dominion of Canada under the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation plan, an individual veteran or two or three veterans might be able to utilize the value under the Veterans Land Act and also the value under the National Housing Act. That might also be a means of assisting to solve the problem of what degree of veteran preference could come under the act of the Minister of Resources and Development.

Mr. Fulton: I appreciate the fact that the minister, in what he has just told us, is revealing something which is under consideration and which is not final. I will therefore not press him to go further into details, except to ask whether that arrangement which he indicated or hinted at would not be subject to the limitation as to the size of the land to which the present small holding scheme is subject. Could a veteran take a piece of land of any size that he himself wished?

Mr. Gregg: That is what we are attempting to work out.

Mr. Fulton: I am glad to have that information. I hope that the arrangements which the minister has in mind will come to fruition because, if I may say so, it sounds to me like a good scheme and the answer to a great many problems.

I just want to say this in addition. I fully agree with the minister that the land under the small holdings scheme is valuable now and will be increasingly valuable as conditions develop; we hope they will never become serious but nevertheless they may become more serious than they are now. My suggestion was not that the small holdings scheme should not be directed toward encouraging veterans to settle on and to work a small plot of land. My thought was rather that of the types of land which so many of these schemes must use, types suitable mainly for fruit farming, the growing of small fruits, berries and so on, three acres is actually too much for a man to handle on a part-time basis.

If he were unemployed—and we hope he never will be—then admittedly it would not be too much. But as long as he is employed or if he is, on the other hand, in the other category that this scheme was designed to help, namely a veteran in receipt of a disability pension, again three acres is probably too much for him to handle. That is why I say: Do not do away with the idea of a small holding for a genuine part-time farming operation. Merely give your directors and regional supervisors more discretion to recommend that in this case, because it is an

orchard operation, because it is a berry farm or because the price of the land is extremely high, we think that this veteran should be allowed to settle on perhaps one and a half acres or two acres or 1.9 acres. That was my only suggestion.

May I now ask some specific questions with regard to the expenditure. Can the minister tell us what was actually expended last year on travelling expenses, on purchase and replacements of motor vehicles and on legal fees?

Mr. Gregg: Travelling expenses, \$574,340; legal fees, \$124,116. What was the third one?

Mr. Fulton: Purchases and replacements of motor vehicles.

Mr. Gregg: \$29,689.

Mr. Fulton: Why are the legal fees continuing at such a high level? I know that when a veteran purchases privately under his own arrangements with the administration he is obliged to pay the legal fees for perfecting his title. I can appreciate the fact that, when the scheme was first being worked out and the department was buying tracts of land to be open to development, there would probably be extensive legal fees in connection with the searching and the conveyancing. But by this time I would think that those fees would be rather tapering off and that from now on it would be more a matter of the individual deal. That being the case, I am not quite able to understand why these extremely high legal fees are continuing to be necessary.

Mr. Gregg: There has to be payment to the lawyers for the searching of titles. We are fairly well at their mercy. While it is true that some of these properties were purchased some years ago, nevertheless, when the new veteran takes over, the title has to be searched in each individual case and registered.

Mr. Fulton: Does the minister not think that possibly he is overestimating a little bit? I notice that in 1948-49 the estimate for legal fees was \$250,000 and the actual expenditure was \$129,000, or just over half. I notice also that in 1948-49 the estimate for motor vehicle purchases and replacements was \$125,000 and the expenditure was \$19,778. Last year the estimate under that heading was \$35,000 and the expenditure was \$29,000. Does the minister not think that we could perhaps reduce the estimate a little bit under these headings?

Mr. Gregg: With regard to the legal fees, in 1949-50 the estimate was \$125,000. Our estimate for this present year is \$100,000. What I said with regard to the small holdings

[Mr. Gregg.]