

pipe fitters. We have scoured the country from Vancouver to Halifax to get them. I was there yesterday and found the contractor using German prisoners of war, men in uniform from Petawawa, and hiring every man who could be hired.

I think of these things when we get resolutions from the other side of the house about the present serious unemployment problem. I wonder why it is so hard to get men for such a project. Nevertheless I might point out that this is not a project you can let on the basis of a lump-sum contract. The designing of the plant was a major feature. There was never a plant like it built in the world. The process had to be worked out in the laboratory while the plant was being designed. The engineering plan was one short jump ahead of construction, even though we have not been able to push construction as fast as we liked. The design of the last portion of the plant is being carried on now while they are pouring the last of the concrete. It is not a plant that you can take out of the drawer of a desk and say to a contractor, "Go and build this." More study was put into the location of that site than I believed was possible. A dozen sites were looked at and rejected before that one was chosen. There were many factors to be considered, including the purity of water and particularly, of course, the question of safety.

My hon. friend suggested that we should build it against the town of Chalk River. I do not think that would have been a good idea. We received the most expert advice we could get from the United Kingdom and this continent as to the question where the village should be. All the factors were considered. I may say to my hon. friend that I did not like the idea of building a new village any more than he likes it now. It was done for security reasons, and for reasons which seemed good to me at the time. It was desirable that the employees of that plant should be separately housed, and housed within the barbed wire that encloses the three or four square miles which represent the townsite. All I can say is that we took the best advice we could get, advice from scientists, people who really understood the problem, and we followed that advice.

So far as the actual drafting of the plans is concerned, we put that into the hands of the people who we thought had greater experience in designing plants where safety was the important factor than anyone else. We put it into the hands of Canadian Industries Limited and their engineering department. They have had some two hundred draftsmen

[Mr. Howe.]

allocated to the job for the last year and a half. Construction was also under the supervision of Canadian Industries Limited. It was carried out by the firm of Fraser, Brace, who are the greatest builders of explosive plants in Canada. They have a splendid reputation. The same engineers, under the same contractors, have been responsible for the townsite as well as for the plant itself. We have had supervision there; we have had engineers there throughout looking after the interests of the department. I have not been there every day, but my reports indicate that the money has been well spent. It has been a tremendous sum of money, staggering to anyone, but hon. members could understand it better if they saw the material that goes into the plant itself. Nevertheless I make no apologies for the way in which that project has been carried on. Men who are responsible for the expenditure of something over two billion dollars on similar plants in the United States have complimented us. They have visited the plant frequently and have told us it has been especially well designed and constructed. The speed at which it is being constructed is somewhat greater than they had suggested to me would probably be possible.

Mr. FLEMING: Is the minister going to give the committee any information in regard to the contract? Is there a separate contract with this firm for the construction of the townsite and the construction of the manufacturing plant?

Mr. HOWE: No; it is all one contract.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I should like to say a word about this plant. The Minister of Munitions and Supply has some responsibility as Minister of Supply and as Minister of Reconstruction in seeing that the plants which have been used for war purposes are converted to peace-time production. If the matter is not attended to properly even in this transition period we shall find ourselves in the position where there will be an ever-increasing unemployment roll. I refer particularly to my own city of Calgary and to the Ogden shops. The Ogden shops did have a large employment roll during the war period. That shop has now reduced its employment roll to pre-war levels, with the result that many men are wandering around the streets in search of employment. We have another situation in Calgary similar to that which I have already drawn to the minister's attention, namely, the Calgary Rolling Mills. The government has made an investment of