

Supply—National Defence

As I said earlier, I am ready to renegotiate with those people and their representatives and to re-examine the whole question, and we shall see then. I explained at the outset how the present situation came about. Unfortunately, those people live in what is considered a danger zone. That is why, at the time, we decided it might be better to expropriate them along with the others.

We have never closed the door on a reconsideration of the whole matter. But they did not come back to see us. I saw those people only once. I am willing to meet with them at any time to review the whole matter.

[English]

Mr. Churchill: If there are two more obstinate ministers in the commonwealth, I should like to meet them. We have here, in the Minister of National Defence and the Associate Minister, two gentlemen who stone-wall everything we suggest. They just will not move. Now the associate minister is trying to assure us he is going to look after these people. He is willing to negotiate. He is willing to start all over again. Let us get this thing straightened out. Let the Associate Minister of National Defence answer this question: Is all the land which constitutes the territory of these 25 families already expropriated?

[Translation]

Mr. Cadieux (Terrebonne): The information I gave the committee was with reservation. The military authorities who examined the site decided a cannon and long-range mortar shooting-range was needed in the area. I can go on further. I said that I went no further than that.

[English]

Mr. Diefenbaker: It is not negotiation they want.

Mr. Churchill: My second question is this: Have plans been made to establish a mortar range in or adjacent to the area that has been expropriated?

[Translation]

Mr. Cadieux (Terrebonne): I think so, Mr. Chairman. Naturally, this question was brought up in the office a few months ago. I have not seen the file. This matter just cropped up this afternoon, but I think so.

[English]

Mr. Churchill: Well, that is established, that these plans are already under way for a range for long range mortars. My third question is: Have the people been notified that

when the range has been established, they will then be in a danger area? This is a great lesson in how you do these things in an autocratic manner. You expropriate land, set up or prepare to set up a range in which dangerous weapons will be fired and shells exploded, then inform the people they will be in a danger zone. Then, what are you to do? If they have objections, you say: We are prepared to negotiate to see what we can do. This is a shocking example of autocracy in action, absolutely shocking. Yet, as the Leader of the Opposition has said we are very concerned, and rightly concerned, with regard to the people of the world who are not being treated justly. Let us start with our own people in our own country. I think this is unjust treatment of 25 Canadian families.

As an earlier hon. member pointed out, there was no need for a mortar range in order to practice our troops. Why cannot the minister, Prime Minister or Associate Minister of National Defence tell us that they will go right back to the beginning, cancel the expropriation proceedings and transfer the mortar range to some other area in which there are not any people living? Why can this range not be established at some other military camp at which there are artillery ranges, because that is where these mortar shells should be fired?

An hon. Member: Is that what you want?

Mr. Churchill: Well I am making suggestions. I did not get the significance of that remark.

Mr. Vincent: He is talking about votes.

Mr. Churchill: Well, let him worry about that part of it; I am trying to instil some reason into the heads of these ministers of defence. They know, as I know, that you do not fire many mortar shells in order to train people to fire them during the course of a year. They know, as I know, that battalions rotate from camp to camp. You can have your mortar training and fire live shells as you reach the appropriate camp. They know, as I know, that you are not firing off live ammunition every month of the year. They also know, as I know, that there is not a surplus of mortar shells at the present time. And they know, as I know, that they are expensive.

Now, where do we go from there? The whole idea is ridiculous, and the sorriest part of it all is the absolutely adamant attitude of these two ministers. How do you make a further appeal to them? There is plenty of