

are being made, when all we have is information that so much is going to be expended. I am not arguing on the propriety of not giving full details. But I do think we are entitled to more information than we actually receive under this item. We should have some information as to what camps in Canada are to receive expenditures this year, and in what amounts. Are any new camps or military establishments to be built or set up? And, just in that connection, are any further military sites to be secured and established?

In that connection would the minister explain the circumstances connected with the choice of Debert military camp, in Nova Scotia. No one objects to Nova Scotia receiving a military establishment; its closeness to the sea necessitated the establishment of a camp there. But if ever there was a camp chosen anywhere in Canada which was little short of disgraceful in its early stages in so far as the men are concerned who were required to live in that camp, it is Debert.

Mr. RALSTON: I do not know what my hon. friend means. If he wants to particularize, all right, but he should not make a general statement of that kind.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: I will particularize.

Mr. RALSTON: Debert camp has certainly filled a marvellous place in the defence plans of Canada.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: Yes, but I want to know why this particular place was chosen.

Mr. RALSTON: I will tell my hon. friend.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: All right; that is what I am asking for. The minister is rather touchy on some of these things.

Mr. RALSTON: When my hon. friend uses the expression "little short of disgraceful" in connection with the camp, I suggest he is exaggerating a little.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: I say that the conditions in which some of these men were placed were just that. In the spring of 1941 the camp was almost inundated. With all the available sites in Nova Scotia, the expenditures made on that camp in order to drain it are difficult to understand or to justify. I realize that further figures are available; up to February 26, 1941, the cost of draining that camp was \$236,127.

Mr. RALSTON: That is not excessive.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: I should like to ascertain from the minister what has been the expenditure for drainage since, that is

in the past two years. That is a tremendous amount to expend just for drainage and getting the camp ready.

Mr. RALSTON: Does my hon. friend know the size of the camp?

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: I criticize the choice of that particular location.

Mr. RALSTON: I say, does he know the size of the camp?

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: It is five thousand and some acres: 5,028 acres were to be acquired, according to the figures I have. I should like to know why a location was chosen for a camp that required an expenditure of almost a quarter of a million dollars for drainage when so many other alternative choices were available. I realize that at the outbreak of war, in the desire to secure immediate action, in the rush to establish camps and get operations under way, inevitably some choices might be made which would not be the best possible. But I should like to know who recommended the choice of this site, and who recommends the choice of sites to-day. After a choice has been made by the military authorities, is that choice confirmed by the minister? Generally, I think, we should have a statement regarding the establishment of these camps and the choice of sites.

Mr. RALSTON: I cannot at the moment throw my mind back to all the circumstances. Debert camp has been mentioned several times. The hon. member for York-Sunbury (Mr. Hanson) seems to have a scunner against the camp for some reason. On one occasion when he talked about its being low, I pointed out that according to the contours it was higher than Sussex camp, which is in his own province, and so far as I can remember I have never heard any complaint about that.

Debert camp was chosen at a time when we needed a large camp for the concentration of troops down on the east coast. We needed it for tactical reasons. Debert was located, I think, by the engineers of the department and the engineers of the military district, as it was then,—the Atlantic command was not then formed. It was located and selected on the ground, first, of its tactical location. That is to say, it was near the railways. At the same time it was far enough back to provide for the reserve of troops which could be disposed of by moving over to Pictou and the short line towards Cape Breton—because it was within six miles of Truro, which is a junction