

*Supply—National Defence*

Mr. MacNEIL: There is one further matter to which I wish briefly to refer, in the hope that it may bring forth a statement from the minister as to the policy regarding the construction of armouries across Canada. The people of Canada at this time are making serious sacrifices for the purposes of national defence, and I see no reason why in certain instances armouries should be constructed with a consequent diversion of funds required for purposes of coastal defence. I refer to sessional paper No. 210 of this year. I find that the total cost of armouries and barracks, including lands, and exclusive of maintenance and repairs, has been \$20,163,586. That is quite apart from the lands and buildings transferred by the government of the United Kingdom to the Dominion of Canada free of cost. The annual cost of maintenance of armouries and barracks in Canada is \$994,994—approximately \$1,000,000—including structural repairs, care of buildings, grounds and equipment; also heating, lighting and water services.

I have in my hand a list of the locations of armouries across Canada. In military district No. 1 there are armouries at places like Chatham, Erin, Galt, Ingersoll, Listowel, Parkhill, St. Thomas, Strathroy, Walkerton, Windsor, Elora, Forest, Guelph, Kincardine, London, Sarnia, Stratford, Watford, Wingham, Woodstock, Port Elgin.

In military district No. 2 there are armouries at places like Aurora, Brantford, Brampton, Cannington, Dundas, Georgetown, Haileybury, Markdale, Niagara Falls, Orillia, Paris, Simcoe, Toronto (Fort York), Whitby, Barrie, Burford, Beaverton, Clarksburg, Durham, Hagersville, Hamilton, Meaford, Norval, Oshawa, St. Catharines, Toronto (University avenue), Welland, Milton.

And so it goes on, representing not so much a plan of defence as a first class map of political expenditure. I am concerned because in the estimates just voted for public works there are included a number of items for the purpose of further construction of armouries. For instance, one at Hull, at a cost of something like—

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): \$260,000. It is partly rebuilt.

Mr. MacNEIL:—and a similar expenditure in Cornwall. Quite sincerely, I can see no relation in these expenditures to defence. I oppose this expenditure because it is my belief that it is made largely for political purposes. When you consider the use that is made of these armouries, the comparatively small number of men involved, and the fact that they are dark the greater portion of the time, I consider it is a needless expenditure at this time. I urge the minister to abandon

[Mr. Stirling.]

the construction of armouries. I believe that to do so would accord with the opinion of a large number of senior officers interested in sound policies of national defence, and that such funds as may be expended in this connection should be directly related to coastal defence, which is our real problem at this time.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): I appreciate very much the point of view expressed by my hon. friend, but I must take issue with him at once in regard to the value of armouries in Canada. Particularly since the reorganization of the militia units and the attempts to complete the mechanization of them, I submit that armouries are absolutely indispensable for the training of our Canadian forces, especially in the winter months when they cannot possibly train outside. The only way these units in the interior and the colder portions of Canada can train throughout the year is in these armouries. As a matter of fact I must express my personal regret that the very obvious necessities for the present year with regard to more armoury accommodation in Canada have not been met, because you cannot possibly have complete training of your militia units unless you have the necessary buildings where such training can be carried on.

As I say, I appreciate my hon friend's point of view, but I must take issue with him. To-day the armouries in Canada are used not only for the training of our militia but also to a tremendous extent for community purposes in every small community throughout the country. If this year I had been able to meet all the requests, not only of supporters of the government but of hon. gentlemen in all quarters of this house, with reference to needed armoury accommodation, a further amount of \$5,000,000 would have been required for this purpose. That is the actual situation from the defence point of view. I receive wires and letters every day asking for the loan of armouries for public functions, very often charitable functions, and at the present time these armouries are rendering magnificent service in the smaller communities throughout Canada.

Mr. BENNETT: There are three matters I should like to bring to the attention of the minister on which I should like an expression of opinion before we rise. The first has to do with supplies. The minister has pointed out that he receives requests for the use of armouries for public purposes, and with what he has said as to the necessity for these buildings I absolutely agree. But we have a rule that militia supplies, with the exception of rubber carpeting, should not be allowed out