

of the coast defences is still going on and that is a large item. There is further construction in Newfoundland of several millions; there are certain communication and signal stations and equipment particularly in two vital areas that require construction; there is hospital construction and renovation, which includes something in connection with convalescent hospitals; there are special ordnance buildings which have a low priority on the building list but which are vitally necessary. If my hon. friend was here the other day he will no doubt remember that the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Church) complained bitterly that ordnance at the present time in M.D. No. 2 is occupying a part of the post office building, which the Postmaster General desires very much to have. We have not been able to get out of it this year and construct an ordnance building and I do not know when we shall be able to do so.

There is accommodation at Longue Pointe which has involved millions of dollars and the purpose for which the committee knows. There is training centre accommodation. There are two training centres not yet completed and there is accommodation also for a staging camp. There are certain storage and depot buildings and other projects as well. Most of these do not involve accommodation for personnel but rather for services which are necessary to enable us to carry on here in order that we may make our most effective contribution.

In some items here, certain reductions have already been made, and our policy is that in anything that can be reduced, even though it has been authorized, a reduction shall be made if the circumstances justify it. The deputy minister is constantly reviewing, with the chief of the general staff, every item of construction to see whether or not the situation may have changed or is likely to change, so that this or that particular item may be eliminated or may be modified with a view to reducing costs.

Mr. GREEN: How much of this capital expenditure is to be spent overseas?

Mr. RALSTON: I can give it privately to the hon. member; I should prefer to do that.

Mr. GREEN: Is it a large proportion?

Mr. RALSTON: Some millions.

Mr. GREEN: The navy is also asking for over \$36,500,000 for capital expenditure for construction and the air force is asking for practically \$93,500,000 for the same thing. It is a tremendous amount.

Mr. RALSTON: The hon. member referred to the tremendous amount of lumber and material required—

Mr. GREEN: And labour.

Mr. RALSTON: —and labour. No one appreciates that more than we do in the services. There is an inter-service priority committee which meets and goes over the respective projects and endeavours to place them in some order of priority which will enable the most urgent to be done first, dealing with the Department of Munitions and Supply on that basis. There have been constant meetings between the deputy ministers and the controllers of lumber and of other materials to ensure that first things come first. We are under no illusion as to the scarcity of materials or the necessity for conserving them.

Mr. BENCE: I am concerned about the matter to which the hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Green) has referred. In the first place, the minister has stated that the particular department concerned deals with these various matters. For example, if a building is required for the purposes of the Department of National Defence, only that department concerns itself with acquiring that building. At least, so I understood him. I should like to know how the whole situation is canvassed in view of the existing possibilities of finding some substitute instead of building, in order to save the necessary materials that are being used. For instance, is there anyone in the department who will go through Ottawa and canvass the whole situation and determine whether or not a certain building on a particular street could be used, thus avoiding the necessity of erecting a new temporary building? Again, is the department prepared to put up with a certain amount of inconvenience instead of erecting a new building, in order that necessary materials may be saved, together with the labour that will be required?

I should like to know what the policy of the department generally is with respect to purchasing and renting. In some of the returns made to the house I find for example that in the city of Ottawa a substantial amount of property has been purchased by the Department of National Defence. I am confining my remarks to the army; I am not here dealing with the navy or the air force. Here are some of the buildings acquired: Ottawa Ladies' College, purchased for \$225,000; Woods and Canadian buildings, purchased for \$680,000; Aylmer apartments, purchased for \$321,000; Bate building and Truro apartments, \$233,000. I should like to know what the policy of the department is with regard to such purchases. Did it determine first of all whether there was any