

Supply—National Defence

properties. Provincial governments through the years have had to expropriate and acquire property for a variety of purposes. Until now the practice followed in most cases has been that they have attempted to acquire these properties through negotiation and only if negotiation reached stalemate did they resort to expropriation.

I suggest to the minister that the real reason they have acquired the property in this way is that it is more convenient from an administrative point of view. It is a rather sad commentary on the action of his department that they should have taken this rather highhanded approach in dealing with a number of small property holders in this particular area of the province of Quebec. I am not aware of any ethnic overtones to this problem but I suggest to the minister that in future when the department has to deal with a number of small property holders it should adopt an approach that is more considerate of the property rights of citizens of Canada.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Chairman, I think the government should reconsider this matter. This is a totally unjustified action and has all the earmarks of administrative lawlessness and contempt for the rights of the individual. No amount of excuse can justify the situation created as the result of an arbitrary act by the Department of National Defence. I shall quote some of the observations made in respect of this matter. Is there no heart in the Department of National Defence? This particular area has been occupied for generations. Exception has been made in the case of two or three property owners in the area who have been advised that their property will not be expropriated. I want information on this question. Let me read from the *Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph*, which is not a paper that indulges in sensationalism. This is a shocking disregard of individual rights. The article in the newspaper reads:

The blow fell last autumn.

An emissary of the federal government journeyed to Shannon where he calmly announced that the government had decided to annex most of Shannon—the 6th, 7th, and 8th concessions—to Camp Valcartier which now straddles the southeast corner of the village.

Soon after, expropriation notices were posted. Some 10,000 acres are involved in the impending expropriation—

Next came copies of a form letter which were pushed in mailboxes. They were signed by Brigadier R. H. Lahaie, commander, Eastern Quebec area.

What a nice cozy letter this is. Let me just read what it said:

During the past two months you have read or heard of the plans for the enlargement of Camp Valcartier and it is natural that people who live in the area around the Camp or who own land in the vicinity will seek information on such matters as the need to move or reinvest their money in other lands or enterprises.

What a cozy, kind way to deal with this matter. The department said in effect, "You have been here for generations" and instead of saying that these people could get out in a certain way they said, "All we want is that you move".

• (6:00 p.m.)

As a former holder of an interest in land and buildings, you will receive a sum of money—

Then the article continues:

But this is cold comfort to the Mooneys, Conways, Bowleses, Griffins and Campbells who are now faced with the prospect of pulling up roots put down generations ago.

Then the article gives the observations of some of these people. Surely we are not going to have another Acadian exodus. This is utterly unjustified, and there is no suggestion it can be justified. What is going on here? What are the rights of the people? This great Department of National Defence says, "Get out of here". Families who have not got the best land in the world but have lived there for generations are to be uprooted.

Here are some of the observations of some of the people. John Griffin says:

I quit school at 13 to help my parents on the farm. This is all the work I know. We made a comfortable enough living, but what shall I do now? Become a labourer?

Surely there is not an adamant attitude, a cold, aloof and unjust attitude in this department. The brigadier's letter simply says, "Begone". Let me read what John Griffin goes on to say:

There are far worse cases. Most of the people who are going to be turned out are middle aged. They are too old to learn anything and the uprooting is bound to have a bad effect upon them.

The article continues:

What amazes Griffin is that the federal government decided to take over their land in peacetime. He remembers the time—in 1914—when several families in Shannon were forced to leave their holdings. There was no protest then, for a war was on.

But why in heaven's name do they want to push us around in peacetime, he asks?

The expression is certainly one that is understandable, pushing around Canadians simply because a group has decided that it is