

*Demobilization—Munitions and Supply*

which is under construction there. I ask the minister to give the committee some information with regard to the contract under which the townsite is being constructed; that is, information as to the cost, the basis of the contract, the completion date, and the extent of the buildings contemplated.

Mr. HOWE: I find it difficult to discuss the details of the plant. As my hon. friend knows, the atomic bomb plant or the plant making materials used therein is still a secret. I visited the plant yesterday myself for the first time, and I spent at least an hour of my day trying to pass various guards and get my clearance so that I could move from one part of the plant to another.

Mr. FLEMING: Perhaps the minister misunderstood me. I was not suggesting a break-down as to the items entering into the total representing the cost of the plant; I was rather directing my inquiry to a break-down as between the plant on one hand and the townsite on the other. I take it that the remarks of the minister as to secrecy do not apply to the townsite. Perhaps the minister could give the committee some information as to what the townsite cost.

Mr. HOWE: The townsite is built to accommodate a population of about 1,500. The houses were very largely moved over from other projects; in fact most of the buildings were moved there, some from Arvida, some from Nobel, some from projects in the Montreal area. The assembly hall and the moving-picture theatre were moved there from elsewhere. I have not the details of the project; I can get them if they would be of any help. Of course the vast bulk of the expenditure was on the part of the plant which we cannot talk very much about.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the item carry?

Mr. FLEMING: No, Mr. Chairman. This is a very important item, and I think the committee should fully understand what is being carried on at the present time in construction on the townsite. I am not proposing to say anything about the atomic bomb plant, because frankly I do not know anything about it, and I do not suppose that any hon. member, with the exception of the minister, knows anything of the plant itself. But there are some facts with reference to the townsite—its location, and the expenditures on it—of which the committee, I believe, ought to be aware. I would ask the minister before we leave his estimates to bring down and furnish to the committee some further information along the lines of the inquiry I have just directed toward him.

[Mr. Fleming.]

In the first place I should like to say a word about the location of the townsite. There are matters in connection with it which I think present questions that the minister ought to answer. Although there is an existing town on the railway a matter of six miles from the plant itself, when it came to locating the townsite, that existing site with some hundreds of people living there was deliberately passed over and a site selected some seven miles north. This meant that all the building material coming in for use in the construction of the townsite had to come to the railway station at Chalk River and be put on trucks and taken a further distance of about seven miles to the point where this new townsite called Deep River is being carved out of the bush. That is the first point. It is not the sort of thing that would suggest itself to anyone who knows the situation there as being the logical or the reasonable thing to do. If for reasons of secrecy or of safety it is not prudent to locate the townsite close to the plant, then why was it found desirable to move the townsite some distance north and to pass up an existing townsite offering existing services, and go into the wilderness and start to carve a townsite out of the bush?

As to the construction itself, there is sufficient evidence there to call for much more supervision than is being given by the department to the work that is going on at the present time. I would ask the minister to furnish the committee with particulars of the contract. I am particularly interested in the type of contract under which construction is proceeding at that site, because if my information is correct there has been a great deal of delay. I understand that this is a cost-plus contract, there has been delay after delay in the completion of the work, and at the present time the site is still far from completion.

Moreover, not very much consideration has been given to those who are either employed or employing men in some of the adjacent communities. The wages which have been paid at the site to those engaged in construction have been very high. They are very much higher than those prevailing in the nearby communities, with the result that labour conditions have been completely upset. The plants in Pembroke, for instance, have not been able to get the labour they require and it is all because the whole wage structure in that general locality has been disturbed. The government, through its agencies, has gone on enforcing wage ceilings on the