

Medicine Hat will become an equipment holding unit.

Penhold will become a radio maintenance unit. That will be for radio mechanics, and the maintenance of radio equipment.

Mossbank will become an equipment holding unit.

Lethbridge will become an equipment holding unit.

Pictou will become a pre-aircrew educational school, with about 600 trainees in it.

Guelph, as I said earlier, will be returned to the lessor.

Estevan will be an equipment holding unit.

Swift Current will be a pre-aircrew educational school.

Mr. GRAHAM: What will be the number at Swift Current?

Mr. POWER: About 240 trainees at Swift Current.

Mr. SENN: What service establishments will be necessary at these aircraft holding units?

Mr. POWER: One hundred.

Mr. NOSEWORTHY: Is the department at the present time constructing, or completing the construction of any air fields?

Mr. POWER: I do not think so—well, when I say that I do not think so, I should add that in all possibility there would be certain buildings to be completed. I do know of one, where the school was about to close, and where we had to put a roof on the building. We do that; in order to preserve the property it would have to be done. But orders have been given, generally, to close all works. It must not be forgotten, however, that so long as we are in operation, just as if we were operating a plant or a factory, we will keep that plant up to the highest possible capacity. I am not going to let the plant go down just because there is a possibility of closing in the near future. We are not undertaking any new works, but we are not going to let the plants go down to nothing.

Mr. NOSEWORTHY: Probably the minister will explain why, in a return brought down on March 23 in my name, regarding the airfield at Mount Pleasant, Prince Edward Island, it is stated that up until February 20, 1944, more than \$2,702,000 had been spent, and that there being commitments to date of something over \$4,000,000. Does that \$4,000,000 imply that there is construction work to be done, or work that has already been done?

Mr. POWER: I would think, frankly, that might mean that work would be done, because I know Mount Pleasant is now in operation. The work must be pretty well completed by this time. But there is always work to be done before the thing levels out and becomes as good as we want it to be.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: We are glad to have the minister's explanation, and I am sure it will do much to prevent further misunderstanding. In his remarks the minister did not say anything about the relative merits of schools in eastern and western Canada, so far as flying conditions are concerned.

Mr. POWER: I certainly have said many times in the house that if I had to start this plan over again I would prefer to go to western Canada. There is no question about that—except that certain operational training units might not be placed there, where it is important that the trainees become acclimatized to conditions somewhat similar to those which they will have to meet on the other side. But for ordinary elementary training, and perhaps for service flying training there is no question in my mind that the western prairies is the best country for it.

Mr. HANSELL: A great deal of concern has been registered in different parts of the country concerning the announcement that these air training schools were to be closed. Of course, if the war is soon to come to an end, and if that is the reason for the closing of the schools, the people may rejoice. On the other hand we do know that some are extremely concerned about the closing of the air schools and their concern is clearly from a business point of view. That must not be regarded as an indication that the people have selfish motives, but should be regarded only as an indication that they are interested in their business arrangements, and do not want to see them come to an end. Be that as it may, we recognize that it has to be done sooner or later. The question I would ask the minister is one that concerns many communities, and I would ask him to throw some light upon it. When the government desires to close certain schools, I should like to know the basis of their decision. For instance, the minister said that there were six student flying training schools in Alberta, and that four in Canada are to be closed, one of them being at Macleod. The question that is in my mind and in the minds of the citizens of Macleod is why that particular school has to be closed. I know that if the minister