

Supply—National Defence

report? I say no. Let us have the information.

The Chairman: Shall item 15 carry?

Mr. Churchill: If we are not going to have the information I suggest that the item stand until we get the information.

Mr. Starr: It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that surely the minister and those in the department, having read the Auditor General's report, would have looked up this particular case to satisfy themselves that the Auditor General had a case that was legitimate, because he did bring it out very forcefully. The minister cannot say that they do not have this information. If they do not have it then there certainly is some neglect on the part of somebody in not looking up this particular case to see whether the Auditor General's criticism is legitimate.

Mr. Hellyer: I think the information is available. We just do not happen to have it with us at the moment. The case was checked out, as my hon. friend would expect in the circumstances.

Mr. Starr: Then I would suggest in the circumstances that we stand the item and go on with others in the hope that before we pass the item the information will be forthcoming.

Mr. Hellyer: I would be agreeable, Mr. Chairman.

● (5:40 p.m.)

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, I want to support the remarks of the previous speaker. Strangely enough, this one item has captured the public's imagination more than information in respect of weapons and that sort of thing. This item is in the same category as horses on the payroll. I think we should stand this item so we can have an explanation placed on the record. This is a most intriguing thing.

Mr. Starr: Mr. Chairman, I think the minister has agreed that this item should stand and that we go on to the others so that we can receive some information about this situation before passing the specific item.

Mr. Schreyer: Mr. Chairman, I should like to refer to a matter which I believe comes under the purview of the Associate Minister rather than the minister and has to do with the land expropriation currently being carried out by the department in the vicinity of Camp Valcartier.

[Mr. Churchill.]

I raised this matter yesterday on the assumption that the minister or his associate would make at least some passing reference to it in reply. I note that the estimates allocate only \$100,000 for the acquisition of real property so I assume there is no item in this year's estimates to cover the cost of this specific land acquisition. Nevertheless negotiations are now being carried on and this raises at least one or two questions which I think the minister should attempt to answer. First, is it absolutely necessary that the land of a large number of people be expropriated in order to expand the area of an army camp when there seems to be alternative unsettled land in close proximity to the army camp that could be utilized for this purpose? Apparently the area contemplated for expropriation includes a 150 year old village and a large number of residences.

The other specific point on which I should like the minister to comment has to do with the involvement of an army officer in the negotiations regarding the acquisition of this land. It seems very strange indeed that an army officer should be involved in something that is almost completely a matter for the civil authorities to look after. Would the minister make some comment in this regard?

[Translation]

Mr. Cadieux (Terrebonne): Mr. Chairman, this whole matter of expropriation under way at Valcartier has been considered at length, first by the civil personnel and later by the general manager of properties of the Department of National Defence.

There have been recommendations to expropriate an area of about 60 square miles. After the limits were considered, we received protests from this community called Shannon, which is described in our services not as a village but as a group of small properties comprising approximately 25 families. We considered, at that time, the possibility of doing without, if you want, that part of the land proposed in the acquisition. Once again, the general manager of properties went back to the site so as to conduct an investigation. Further to this investigation, we asked the military authorities to explain to us why this area should be included in the group of properties to be acquired. They explained to us that if those people—and that is when the phrase "Shannon Corridor" was used—it was not meant as a joke—

[English]

It was not meant as a joke.