

Supply—National Defence

we have configured for our own requirements.

The Deputy Chairman: Shall item 15 carry?

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Chairman, there were one or two questions asked before the supper hour having to do with the expropriation of land near camp Valcartier and the dispossession of people who have been living there in a village and on farms which were pioneered by their ancestors 150 years ago. Has the minister had time now to consider these questions and will he indicate to the house that these expropriation actions will cease forthwith so that the 25 families who are now in a state of dismay may be assured that they will be allowed to remain in possession of their homes and property, just as other members of this house would like to be assured under similar circumstances? I am sure the members of this house would resist any expropriation such as this by the Department of National Defence for the purposes outlined to us in regard to the expansion of a military camp. What has the Minister or the Associate Minister to say to guide this house regarding this particular problem? I await their answers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Cadieux (Terrebonne): Mr. Chairman, I said, before the adjournment I believe, that I was prepared to reconsider the whole matter with the parties concerned.

I reminded the hon. member that I had already spoken to these parties, that my officials had started negotiations with them and that, since that time, I had heard no more about the matter, but that I was willing to look into the whole matter once more with a view to finding an adequate solution—I even used the word equitable—for these people. I am most willing to start over again.

[*English*]

The Deputy Chairman: Shall item 15 carry?

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Chairman, one must always examine carefully the words used by the associate minister. Before our supper hour he said he was willing to negotiate a just settlement with the people concerned. What I want to know is whether the whole operation will cease and whether the expropriation will be cancelled so that these people may be left where they are. What the associate minister is suggesting is that he will undertake to carry out negotiations with those people who object to the price they are being offered for their homes. That is not

what we are talking about. We are talking about justice and equitable treatment for these people, leaving them where they are and establishing the mortar firing range somewhere else.

This afternoon the Minister of National Defence would not tell me the length of the range required for mortar firing. Apparently that information is so highly secret it should not be divulged. I wonder if perhaps Mr. Spencer has already obtained that information. Apparently the minister does not want the Russians to know the range of our mortar, but I doubt very much whether that is the kind of information which is not already accessible to any country in the world that has an interest.

I wanted an answer to that question in order to ascertain how much land is required. Why are there not other artillery ranges in existence that could be used for this purpose? It is a simple matter to have musketry ranges at army camps for rifle and machine gun fire; but in regard to mortar fire, as is the case with artillery fire, you must have a wider area for safety reasons. If this change at Valcartier is being made in order to set up a range for mortar fire, I suggest this reason could be better satisfied by using artillery ranges somewhere else, likely at a lesser cost.

May I ask the minister whether any part of the Valcartier camp—and I am not familiar with its state in recent years—is used for artillery practice. If the answer to that question is yes, then he already has in effect a mortar range there. If the answer is no, I would ask the minister why he does not shift this mortar practice to places where artillery ranges are already in operation. Will the minister tell me whether or not there is an artillery range in use at camp Valcartier?

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Chairman, there is no artillery range at camp Valcartier. Indeed, there was nowhere near sufficient land, until this expropriation took place, to permit either mortar or artillery fire of any kind. The range that exists there is so limited and so congested with unexploded shells that practically no firing can be done. While it is true that units can be moved to other camps, as they are regularly during the summertime to camp Gagetown, for example, this involves a rather short period of time in which there are concentrated exercises, at a considerable transportation cost.

More important than that, Mr. Chairman, is the rather restricted training time in summer,