

*Supply—National Defence*

this vote is for the purpose of commencing the construction and development of a combined station.

Mr. TUMMON: The minister made this announcement the other day on another item and I think he intimated that the matter might be discussed when this vote came up. Needless to say, I am very much pleased that the department has decided on the bay of Quinte as the place where this camp will be located. This question of the establishment of a camp for the Royal Canadian Air Force for both land planes and seaplanes, along the bay of Quinte, has been discussed for many years in that district. For some time it was expected that Camp Mohawk, a few miles west of Deseronto, would be selected. This camp was operated quite extensively by the Imperial government during the war and was looked upon as a very excellent camp. The people of that district expected the camp to be established there, particularly in view of the fact that in the report of the Department of National Defence for 1926, under the heading, "No. 1 Flying Station, Camp Borden" the following appeared:

The air station at Camp Borden, at present in use, is that which was built during the war by the Imperial Munitions Board as a training station for the R.A.F. units recruited in Canada. The station, though admirably suitable for flying operations on a large scale, is too large for the present establishment of the R.C.A.F. Maintenance charges in general are altogether disproportionate to the present strength of the R.C.A.F. The camp is, as well, isolated and difficult of access. For these reasons it is hoped that accommodation, on a more suitable scale, involving smaller maintenance charges, may be made available at an early date for the training of the R.C.A.F.

With this in view, an excellent site has been surveyed at Deseronto for a joint seaplane and aeroplane base, and it is hoped that funds may be made available for the construction of the necessary buildings in the near future.

Naturally there was considerable disappointment at Deseronto when it was learned that another location had been decided upon. I would like to ask the minister if he would make a statement as to the considerations which contributed to the making of this choice.

Mr. RALSTON: If the committee will permit me to say so, I think it would be undesirable at this time to put on record the factors which were considered in respect to something like thirty different places which have been examined. The reports are confidential and perhaps it would not be in the best interests of the service to have these matters spread on the record; the towns themselves might prefer that they should not be. A deputation from Deseronto

[Mr. Ralston.]

recently interviewed me and asked that the proposal in regard to Trenton be reconsidered. Deseronto had been under consideration and in 1926 it was thought to be the best site, but after that time Trenton came into the picture and a thorough examination was made of that site. I wanted Deseronto to feel that their claim had been thoroughly considered and I told them that our one object was to obtain a location which was most suitable to the service, having regard to the many factors which had to be considered. I told them that Trenton had been selected after a full investigation by responsible technical officers, and I could not hold out any hope that any change would be made. In order that the citizens of Deseronto might be assured that every angle of the matter had been studied, I offered to have the relative facilities, the advantages and disadvantages of the two localities checked up again in order that no paramount feature in favour of Deseronto might be overlooked.

Mr. THOMPSON: Would the minister advise the committee as to the amount which has been expended upon Camp Borden, and the amount which it is calculated will be necessary to expend upon the new camp at Trenton?

Mr. RALSTON: Camp Borden was a concentration camp in 1916, and 40,000 men were quartered there, while the proposed camp will have a capacity of 500 men. The committee will see that a comparison between costs of a camp for 40,000 and one for 500 would not be a fair one. We have made a careful estimate of the existing facilities at Camp Borden, outside of the land itself, and have arrived at the conclusion that notwithstanding the cost the buildings and plant would represent only a valuation of \$234,000 for the purpose of being usefully utilized in connection with the development of a permanent station at that camp. Outside of that, the total expenditure at Camp Borden could be regarded as an expenditure for a military concentration camp for war purposes, and not for aviation in time of peace. The amount which was paid for Camp Borden in connection with aviation was \$375,000, which was paid to the imperial munitions board at the time the buildings were taken over on a 25 per cent basis.

Mr. THOMPSON: What has been the total cost of the camp to date?

Mr. RALSTON: I will give my hon. friend the construction items. Since that \$375,000 was spent, the air board has spent \$37,000 on construction—I will give my hon.