

Supply—National Defence

be taken under the Criminal Code. Will action be taken against the persons involved?

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Chairman, in fact these persons enlisted under age and they did serve and therefore they are entitled to the benefits under the law. I think if my hon. friend were to check the records of all the people who served in world war I and world war II and in between he would find a rather large number of people who enlisted under age by one means or another. Although one might raise a question in respect of this, I think it was almost common practice with young men who wanted to get into the services.

Mr. Fairweather: As one who enlisted at age 17, and there was some collusion about it, I know whereof the minister speaks but I did not attempt it at age 9, 10 or 11. That is what I am referring to. The Auditor General refers to people of that age. I do not think anyone worries about the year.

Mr. Hellyer: Did the hon. member get the point that at the time they were enlisted they were entitled to enlist at 13?

Mr. Fairweather: The Auditor General speaks of nine-year-olds. Some of us were fairly sizeable people at 13 but I am not sure how many people could serve Canada well at nine years of age.

Mr. Hellyer: I suspect, that like the hon. member and myself they must have been big boys.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Chairman, I have a question I should like to ask the minister relating to the R.C.A.F. airbase at Penhold, Alberta. At present this base is being held on a maintenance status only until its role in the new training program is determined and it has been so held since the time of the actual abolition of the jet flying training program.

Can the minister inform us whether the department has decided to turn over the actual runways and related flying facilities to the Department of Transport, with the intention of providing much needed and urgently demanded municipal airport facilities? If this is so, until the negotiations between the city of Red Deer and the department are completed would it be possible to use the runways for civilian planes inasmuch as it will perhaps be some time before the negotiations between the Department of Transport and the city are completed.

Mr. Hellyer: I think the situation is that we would be willing to turn over the runways to either the Department of Transport or the

city or the two together if they were interested in entering into some kind of joint arrangement. In so far as interim use is concerned between now and the time agreement can be reached, provided we still have personnel available there I would be willing to take this question as notice to see whether it would be possible to extend the use of the airfield for civilian purposes.

Mr. Thompson: The minister says he will be willing to turn over to either the Department of Transport or the local authorities the runways and facilities. Has there been any formal notice given to the Department of Transport of the department's willingness to do this?

Mr. Hellyer: I cannot say whether or not it is formal but certainly there have been informal discussions to this effect. I cannot say whether any paper has passed between the two departments but in fact the airfield is available to the Department of Transport if they wish to take over and operate it.

Mr. Churchill: I should like to return to the question of the six persons whom the minister named in response to the question concerning the Auditor General's report. Will the minister inform us as to the age on enlistment of each one of these persons and the length of their service in the militia and in the regular army?

Mr. Hellyer: I do not have that information readily available but I would be more than happy to provide it either at a later time or obtain it and make it available to my hon. friend if he would agree to that.

Mr. Churchill: Could we not have the name of the person whose enlistment dates back to age nine?

Mr. Hellyer: I am not sure which one it is offhand but I will find out.

Mr. Churchill: Why can we not find out right now? This was in the Auditor General's report and it appeared in the papers and was raised in the house several weeks ago. It was specifically asked for by the Leader of the Opposition. Surely we can have the answer immediately instead of being left with the answer that we will receive the information in some roundabout way at some indefinite time. Let us have the full facts instead of the flippant answer the minister gave the hon. member for Royal that perhaps some of them were big boys. Let us pin it down specifically. The Auditor General has specifically mentioned these persons. Are we to neglect his