

Supply—National Defence

Mr. Pearkes: I will take that under advisement and look into it personally and see what can be done.

Mr. Pickersgill: Just one further question; I have looked at the figure. The figure covers the acquisition of major equipment as well as buildings, works and lands. The total figure is nearly \$91 million. I think the minister gave a figure for the four Atlantic provinces of something under \$3 million. The minister will recall that at the time of the 1957 election the candidates supporting the present government made great representations in the Atlantic provinces about how large a diversion of expenditures they were going to make to the Atlantic provinces, and I wondered if I heard aright that of the \$90 million only \$3 million is being spent in the Atlantic provinces.

Mr. Pearkes: Yes, but there is a considerable amount being spent for the other services, the navy and the air force. I am afraid that this time the army in the Atlantic provinces is not getting as much as it did last year but I think you will find that on balance the Atlantic provinces are getting a very fair share of the construction.

Mr. Pickersgill: Perhaps the minister can tell us, since I was not bright enough to think of the question, how much the navy is spending in Newfoundland.

Mr. Pearkes: I am afraid that the books have been taken away but I will look that up and let the hon. member know privately.

Mr. Pickersgill: That will be quite satisfactory.

Mr. McFarlane: Mr. Chairman, I see that we are spending approximately \$90 million for construction throughout the Dominion of Canada. I should like to make a plea this evening for the construction of armouries especially in our smaller centres. Two years ago we were advised that the construction of an armoury at Kimberley, British Columbia, had been approved in principle early in 1956. In spite of the publicity given at that time, funds were never made available nor has a vote been approved by treasury board. To all intents and purposes this item was dropped. No allocation of money was made by the previous government either in 1956 or in the April budget of 1957.

We are spending many millions in the larger centres of Canada and forgetting that the backbone of the country lies in our smaller centres. We had with us at this morning's session representation from the navy, and a good many of these boys come from the smaller centres of Canada. I think we should do something to encourage both

the army and the navy boys in their work. Savings in travelling expenses alone could be diverted to writing off the cost of construction of armouries in the various smaller centres of Canada.

Therefore I should like to ask the minister again to give some consideration to the construction of an armoury in Kimberley. We have in the unit there a very active group of men. At the present time they have inadequate hall space which is rented periodically to carry out a program of training. I should like to read an extract from a letter to indicate what they are up against in this area. It reads as follows:

As for us in Kimberley, we continue to struggle along trying to run a unit of approximately 100 men in the rented lower half of the Oddfellows hall. We continue to hire half of a civilian garage to house our vehicles, and rent rooms in the adjoining public school for training space on parade nights. The total bill to the public for all this is, I know, much more than would be the case in a more efficient plant. We do our best but the training suffers and the administrative headaches are too numerous to mention.

Administration alone has become really a problem in itself. At the present time this unit has very little in the way of facilities and equipment to carry on its work. It has been suggested that the unit should travel a distance of 40 miles in order to carry out a parade two nights a week. I think that during the cold winter months a good many men are going to forego parade if they have to travel that distance, especially over icy roads.

We depend on the trained units of our country to take over in time of need. I think we should encourage these smaller units to continue and in my opinion the only way we can do so is by building armouries in our smaller centres. Of the \$90 million expenditure this year I think, speaking specifically of the cost with respect to Kimberley, that we would require approximately \$200,000 to \$250,000, which is a very small percentage of the entire vote. I also think that we should decentralize our forces. At the present time the bulk of our spending is being done in the larger centres of Canada, and I think it is very essential to support these units in the smaller urban and rural areas.

I would respectfully request the minister to reconsider the present policy and to support the active units with adequate facilities, particularly in the interior of British Columbia where they are badly needed.

Mr. Pearkes: I thank the hon. member for bringing the needs of Kimberley to my attention. A lot of armouries are required across the country and we have to put them on a strict priority basis having in mind our other requirements. I would call his attention to