

Supply—National Defence

been made to discuss the necessity of the undertaking, relocation plans and so on. It would seem that emissaries from the department have gone there and given what amounts to an ultimatum to the residents. Surely this is unfortunate and highhanded. When the rights of individual citizens are concerned no effort should be spared to deal with them in a proper manner.

One other aspect of this whole program of land acquisition which rather intrigued me relates to the fact that it was a military person, I believe the commanding officer of the brigade, who got in touch with the people to inform them of the need for this land by the Department of National Defence. It strikes me as being very strange that military personnel should involve themselves in the process or procedure of land acquisition. Surely this is something that should be handled by civilian authorities. What possible justification can there be for having military personnel involve themselves in what is essentially a transaction between the government and the property owners?

At some appropriate time during the course of our consideration of these estimates I should like all these points to be explained. I hope someone will elaborate on the circumstances and offer some defence for the administrative procedures followed by the department in this particular case.

Finally, I think it is incumbent upon the minister to explain how it is that after months of a campaign to explain to the Canadian people that our defence policy is geared toward higher mobility of our armed forces through integration with a reduction of personnel and with the savings acquired therefrom to be reallocated to greater and more effective weaponry, we now find after all this talk that there is really no substance to it and that we have not apparently improved our defence capability one iota.

● (4:10 p.m.)

Mr. MacRae: Mr. Chairman, I should like to speak briefly on the estimates of the Department of National Defence. My interest in the subject is prompted by the fact that in the constituency I represent is found the finest military establishment in the British Commonwealth, namely, Camp Gagetown with its model city beside the camp, its new buildings and 427 square miles of what is the finest training terrain in this nation and perhaps in the world. As a matter of fact, Camp Gagetown is considered to be such a

fine camp that military observers from all the nations of the free world come there during the summer concentration to watch the exercises and this winter the American marines finished a tour of duty there. They tell me that even this battle-hardened group found it a tough enough experience.

There are several units there at the moment, the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, the Royal Canadian Dragoons, which have been mentioned in the debate, the Royal Highlanders of Canada, two battalions of the Black Watch, the new service battalion and the other units which I think can be considered to be Canada's finest military units.

Just as we in this House of Commons cannot be experts on everything, so in those subjects in which we do become interested we pick out certain factors we like to discuss and think about. My interest in defence is concerned more with the human factor, the person, the personnel. I should like to thank the minister for the unfailing courtesy he has afforded me in the defence problems I have taken to him, and especially the Associate Minister whom I see there beside him. I have on many occasions written to the Associate Minister of National Defence and his answers have always been helpful. I have not always received the satisfactory solution which I have sought but he has always been helpful indeed and I wish to express my thanks to him at this time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. MacRae: On Friday last, February 18, the Associate Minister announced that a re-engagement bonus would be paid. I was very pleased to hear this because on the order paper at this moment under the date of February 17, the day before, is a question in my name asking for the government to consider this matter. I also raised it when speaking in the debate on the Speech from the Throne and it was very much a subject of discussion of course, in the last election campaign in my riding.

For the record, Mr. Chairman, I advocated that there should be a re-engagement bonus paid because it seems to me that far too many men are being lost to the service at the end of their third, fifth or tenth year of service, as the case may be. I commend the minister and the government for this particular action in making available to the members of the armed services the re-engagement bonus. It is quite true, as somebody said last