

Supply—National Defence

cabinet and tell the cabinet they are going to rescind the order in council expropriating this property, and that they are going to take another look at this question and leave these people and their property rights alone. Property rights is one of the basic rights in this land.

I am glad to see the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources listening to this debate because I have had some experience with reference to his department in this regard. Therefore I might be able to kill two pigeons with one stone.

We know all about the sort of equitable negotiations which take place with departments or through ministers, so I think the minister should explain what he means by negotiations. Is he prepared to go back to cabinet and recommend that this order in council be rescinded? Is he prepared to say to these people who have traditionally held this land: "I am going to leave you here and will carry on this enterprise somewhere else without interference with property rights"? Before this item passes we want the minister to clarify exactly what he means.

[Translation]

● (9:00 p.m.)

Mr. Cadieux (Terrebonne): Mr. Chairman, I think the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Woolliams) will understand exactly what I mean when he reads in the official report the statement which I made and shall now repeat.

I said that I was ready to negotiate again with the people concerned. Not having heard from those people since the beginning of my correspondence with them, am I convinced and, in spite of that newspaper article, am I in fact certain that they still wish to remain in the expropriated area? I am not convinced of it. I say that I am ready to negotiate with them and to find out precisely what they want. I am ready to treat them equitably. I do not think one could ask for more.

[English]

Mr. Woolliams: Does the minister mean by that that if he does send an ambassador—I call him that—to find out whether the people concerned want to remain where they are, and if this ambassador who is an agent of the minister speaks to these people and they say to him, "We want to keep our traditional homes", he is going to go along with that request? That is the whole point of my question. Let us forget about the niceties of words; let us get down to brass tacks.

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Mr. Diefenbaker: That is precisely the point.

[Translation]

Mr. Cadieux (Terrebonne): Mr. Chairman, when I say I shall do everything in my power, I think that I cannot be asked for more. That is what I undertake to do.

[English]

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Chairman, I am not questioning the minister's integrity. He is going to do everything possible, but "possible" may be exactly what has happened to many other Canadians in this country, so far as expropriation proceedings are concerned. If the minister and the associate minister really want to do something to show the right spirit, in response to requests made from this side of the house—because this is an important matter and has been raised by other members in other parties—they must realize that if that type of ambassador is sent out, and if it is found that the people concerned wish to stay where they are, then the department should rescind the order in council and should start expropriation proceedings. When the minister can give that kind of undertaking, then I think we shall be prepared to let the matter pass.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Apparently he says no to that.

Mr. McCleave: May I ask the associate minister if all 25 families are standing firm against this department, or have any of the 25 families shown that they want to compromise, or to negotiate the matter.

[Translation]

Mr. Cadieux (Terrebonne): As far as I can remember, Mr. Chairman, and I hope to be excused because I do not have the file with me, all the persons involved did not sign the petition. That may be due to the fact that the Department of National Defence has come to an agreement with them.

[English]

Mr. Schreyer: Would the minister say whether to the best of his knowledge the people concerned have already been given notice as to a date to vacate the premises?

[Translation]

Mr. Cadieux (Terrebonne): As far as I can recall, no date was set for leaving the premises. On the contrary, those people were given to understand that it would probably take several years before the base was fully enlarged. That was one of the considerations.