

*Supply—National Defence*

land in Canada for the exercises they suggest. Is there some other reason behind this? That is what we should like to find out. I say let us cancel the whole operation and assure these people that they will not be dispossessed; and let us make other plans for the mortar range which apparently is required.

**Mr. Schreyer:** Mr. Chairman, I am happy to see the Associate Minister of National Defence is now concerned about the problem which I raised yesterday and again this afternoon. When I put the matter to him initially he seemed quite unperturbed and undisturbed about it. I am sure that if I had not raised it again today he would have allowed the estimates to go through without making any comment upon it.

He now says he is concerned about the individuals who are being dispossessed in this area and that he will take whatever steps or action is possible in order to give them some sort of redress of grievance. They do have a real grievance, Mr. Chairman, because it seems to me wrong for government to use its powers of expropriation in the perverse kind of way it has used them in this particular instance. Why should government, when dealing with a relatively small number of little property holders, have to invoke the power of expropriation without at least attempting first of all to acquire this real property through the process of free negotiation? The minister made mention of the possibility of land speculators getting into the deal. I would say to him that the custom and practice in the provinces over the years has been to resort to negotiation as often as possible, and to resort to expropriation only after negotiation has broken down or ended in stalemate.

There is no great fear of speculation in the particular community involved here. It is not as though we were dealing with a suburban community in a large metropolitan complex. Perhaps there could be the problem of speculation there, but not, Mr. Chairman, in a rural community in Canada.

I submit to the associate minister that the reason he has given is really a poor excuse. I would suggest to him that if he searches for the real reason that expropriation was resorted to in this case he will find it was administrative convenience. It is certainly more convenient to the administration to acquire property in this way. All they have to do is simply to file a plan of expropriation at the land titles office, and that is all there is to it: the land is then vested in the Crown. Then they proceed to negotiate. But that kind of

[Mr. Churchill.]

negotiation is, I suggest, spurious. No real bargaining or negotiation can take place. The individuals in this case have, in effect, been robbed of their property rights.

The minister said that having duly considered the matter in the past he came to the conclusion that this land really was necessary for the enlargement of camp Valcartier. However, when you read the excerpts which have appeared in the press from the letter written by the minister to some of the people in that area, you find he makes reference to this need in this particular area—by the way, he refers to it as the “Shannon corridor”—and says that this particular land is needed as a means of access to some government-owned land further north from camp Valcartier.

I would ask the minister whether this land actually was needed for training purposes, or was it needed in the department's opinion merely as a means of access to larger tracts of military training ground held or owned by the government further to the north?

I make no apologies for raising this matter. Someone asked me why it was necessary to raise this question in the House of Commons because, after all, this forum is supposed to deal with affairs and problems on a national scale. It has been suggested that only 25 families are involved here. When large bodies such as governments deal with holders of small plots of property and impinge on their rights, it is necessary to take as firm a stand as possible against any infractions by what the Leader of the Opposition called autocracy. I sincerely hope the minister or the associate minister will look at the file once again to see whether the course of action they have taken was necessary in the first place.

**Mr. Woolliams:** Mr. Chairman, I think the question asked the minister and the associate minister is a very simple one. As has been said, they have expropriated this land by order in council and filed certain documents in connection therewith. The minister has referred to negotiation, but all he has really said to these people is: “We will negotiate with you people but you are going to leave. We will make it so tough that you will leave, but we will negotiate a fair, equitable price”. In other words he is saying “We might offer you a few more dollars to get out”.

The point which we are making tonight is this. Surely what hon. members are asking for is an undertaking from the minister or the associate minister that when they talk about negotiation they will go back to the