

point—moving into Halifax over the main line there, or moving down the valley over the Midland railway which connects with the Dominion Atlantic railway at Windsor: It was right at that junction point; and further, it was just about the right distance from Halifax and these coastal towns to be effective as a reserve camp. Further, it was directly beside a large airport which, as I recall, was a Royal Air Force airport at that time, although I am not quite sure about that; but Debert had been chosen, and the airport was either completed or well on the way to completion. Those, I would say, were the two main reasons, along with a third, that it was well located beside a good town, the town of Truro, where men could have a reasonable opportunity for diversion and recreation. I would say those were the three outstanding considerations which influenced the decision to select Debert camp.

My hon. friend speaks of the disgraceful condition. I think he must have in mind the idea that the land is low lying. He speaks of the cost of drainage. As a matter of fact, he is speaking about a camp which is nearly nine square miles, and if that area were to be drained all over it would cost a good deal of money. I only hope that the drainage has been effective. I was down there in the early days when Debert was just being cut out, and I shall never cease to admire the Regina Rifles who were there at the time pulling stumps out of the parade ground. They were helping in every possible way to get things into shape. They were doing a splendid job under conditions which were and which could not but be primitive at that time. The engineers themselves were practically the last to get into quarters of their own, for they were engaged in getting quarters for everyone else ready first. Nothing has been brought to my attention which indicates that Debert camp is in any condition that might be described as disgraceful. I think I would have heard about any such condition; it would have been brought to my attention when I was down there.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: What has been the cost of drainage since 1941?

Mr. RALSTON: There were no major expenditures last year.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: What was the expenditure?

Mr. RALSTON: There are nine miles of paved roads in the camp and a hard-surface parade ground. I consider that absolutely essential for any camp of that size, whether on the top of a hill or elsewhere. I consulted with the camp engineer and the engineer of the Atlantic command, and I may say that

[Mr. Ralston.]

the parade ground is about completed now. I am disappointed that my hon. friend should speak as he does about Debert camp, because I know of some people who have come from the United States, having visited the camp, and who were considerably impressed by it. They were people who knew something about camps and about construction and they wrote me a very complimentary letter with regard to the camp. My hon. friend will probably say that this was during the summer. As a matter of fact, I do not remember when it was. I think the hon. member has been misinformed to some extent when he speaks about disgraceful conditions. The camp has served a most useful purpose and has been one of our most efficient and effective camps in Canada.

Mr. ADAMSON: What about Camp Borden?

Mr. RALSTON: The amount expended is about \$2,000,000, including the construction at Meaford tank range.

Mr. ADAMSON: Is that the last fiscal year?

Mr. RALSTON: Yes.

Mr. ADAMSON: The minister mentioned construction overseas. This item includes rentals in Canada. Does it include such items as the rental of headquarters buildings and billeting expenses in England?

Mr. RALSTON: I am not sure about the last point. It includes rental of buildings, but I am not sure about billeting expenses, because there has been a discussion about the per capita rate. In connection with some troops the capitation rate, as it is called, applies with regard to billets as well as certain other personal items.

Mr. ADAMSON: But it would include, shall we say, corps headquarters?

Mr. RALSTON: Yes, I am so advised.

Mr. ADAMSON: One other question. When the department rents a building, does it employ an agency or does it do this work itself?

Mr. RALSTON: It does the work itself.

Mr. ADAMSON: It is its own agent?

Mr. RALSTON: Yes. You will see orders in council passed from time to time appointing so and so at a rate of so much a day when employed in connection with this particular work. These men cover all parts of the country. From time to time, however, many men from real estate agencies give their services free in the matter of advising.

Mr. PERLEY: Coming back to the buildings in Saskatchewan I suggest to the minister