

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): No, they come under civil aviation.

Mr. STIRLING: I judge from the decrease in this item that the other departments have made smaller requests for the use of air service than in previous years: is that so?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): That is correct in some cases.

Mr. HEAPS: May I turn for a moment to another aspect of this question? I have no doubt that the government have in their employment, in the branch the estimates of which are now under consideration, quite a number of qualified and experienced pilots and quite a large number of what I would call good planes of a kind that can do long distance flying. Has it ever been under the consideration of the department whether, in conjunction with the post office, air mail services could be established under the vote that we are now considering?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): Of course that raises a definite question of policy. The experience of the country to the south of us has been very much against the suggestion of my hon. friend. I recall that some two years ago the United States endeavoured to establish the transportation of air mail by some of their government planes. The attempt was to some extent disastrous in its results, and as far as my knowledge goes it is not the intention of this government to establish such a service from directly government sources. The branch of civil aviation is being transferred from the Department of National Defence to the Department of Transport, thereby ensuring the essentially civil character of the civil aviation branch. This vote for civil government air operations is entirely civil, but the type of airplane used in many cases is a semi-military one. There is provision for four new planes in addition to the ones for purely air force purposes, and these four planes are of a type to which my hon. friend for Vancouver South (Mr. Green) referred a few moments ago, a type easily convertible for military purposes. The four are costing, I think, \$240,000; that is \$60,000 apiece.

Mr. HEAPS: If I remember correctly, conditions in the United States are entirely different from what we have in Canada. At the time an investigation took place in the United States with regard to the military branch of the government doing air mail work, there was already established a fairly substantial air mail service from other sources,

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and it was a question of one competing with the other. I think the United States government, in its wisdom or otherwise, decided that the transportation of air mail in that country should be left to private concerns.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): That is correct.

Mr. HEAPS: In this dominion we are in a wholly different position. Our physical layout is altogether different. We have practically no air mail service at all. When we send a letter by air mail to-day across the dominion, that letter has to go to the United States to be carried by their airplanes across the continent. If we post a letter in Ottawa to go to Vancouver by air mail, I assume it is sent there across the United States via Seattle. I wondered whether, as we have this military air service in Canada, greater use could not be made of it than is made at the present time. Of course, if conditions in this country were similar to those in the United States a couple of years ago, I could understand the contention of the Minister of National Defence having some justification, but at this time we have no air mail service at all in Canada, and if we have airplanes that will serve us for long distance flying between one area and another, I wondered whether those airplanes could not be used in some practical way in addition to the use that is being made of them at the present time.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): Of course the question raised by my hon. friend is a matter of policy not yet determined, so I cannot give him an immediate reply.

Mr. HEAPS: Would the minister state what he himself favours?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): I believe in the principle of collective wisdom, so I would not care to venture an opinion.

Mr. HEAPS: Is the minister afraid of individual wisdom?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): Never.

Mr. STIRLING: I do not know whether the minister remembers that when Canada was interesting herself in mail flying some years ago, this was done entirely by contract. If I may express an opinion at the moment, it is that if and when we do return to mail carriage by air, it should be under contract.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): Hear, hear.

Mr. STIRLING: The minister has already referred to the fact that when the United States government took over the flying of mail