

*Supply—Mounted Police*

cleared up fairly satisfactorily by the minister. That was in connection with the position of men who, their time in the mounted police having expired, preferred to join the services rather than reenlist with the mounted police. I should like the minister now to tell the committee whether these men will be taken back into the service more or less automatically, or what is to be their position.

Mr. ST. LAURENT: I cannot say anything more than I said the other day. They are being treated just as sympathetically as can be done without breaking the promises that were made to those who stayed with us. Everyone who has wanted to come back has come back, in the rank he held when he left. There are seven who have not been granted seniority over those who stayed and served us as we requested them to do.

Mr. HARKNESS: If I understand the minister correctly, of the men who joined the services and who have indicated their willingness to come back, only seven have not been taken back?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: They have been taken back in the rank they held when they left; but they have not been given seniority over those who did not go.

Mr. HARKNESS: Do I understand correctly that only seven men of those who have applied to rejoin the force have been refused?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: No. What I am saying is that there are only seven who, when their contracts expired, left the force and who have applied to come back and who, being fit to serve, were reengaged and have not been granted seniority over those who did not leave. They were all non-commissioned officers. They have been given back their rank, but not the seniority they would have earned if they had complied with the request made to them to continue in service here. The case of each one has been carefully considered by the commission, and I think the discipline in the force testifies to the fact that the commissioner gives his men a fair deal. I have never tried to overrule his decisions in that matter, and I think it would be harmful to the discipline of the force if the men felt that it was not the commissioner but rather the minister who was making final decisions.

Mr. HARKNESS: I understand that there are probably seven special cases of men who did not get the seniority they might have, if they had stayed on the force. We will leave them aside because, after a considerable number of years in the army, I can readily imagine that cases such as that arise, and

[Mr. Harkness.]

there may be very good reasons for them. However, my question actually concerns the number of men who joined the forces rather than reengage in the mounted police force, who have not been accepted for reengagement, now that the war is over. How many men are there of that kind, and what is their fate?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: All those, with the exception of a few whose records did not recommend them to the judgment of the commissioner, have been reengaged. No one has been refused because he went into the armed forces instead of renewing his contract. There have been no refusals on that ground. There have been a few whom, having left the force, whatever their reasons for leaving may have been, the officers of the force did not feel that they wished to reengage.

Mr. HARKNESS: My information is that a certain number of men who joined the services when their time expired in the mounted police have been refused readmission to the mounted police, so far as I know without any proper cause.

Mr. ST. LAURENT: If the hon. member would give me the names of those who have been refused I shall confidentially communicate to him or, if he wishes, I shall put on the records of the house the reasons for which they were refused.

Mr. HARKNESS: I shall be glad to give a few names. But my question was this: How many people have been refused readmission to the service after having served in the navy, the army or the air force?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: None has been refused because of having served in the navy, the army or the air force.

Mr. HARKNESS: I am afraid the Minister of Justice is begging the question. My question is simply this: How many people who did serve in the navy, the army or the air force and who have subsequently applied for further attestation or admittance to the mounted police have not been taken on strength?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: The commissioner informs me that he recalls only two who have been turned down.

Mr. KIDD: I would bring to the attention of the minister that there would appear to be a condition in the mounted police something similar to that which was found in the penitentiaries service. Both these services come under the minister's jurisdiction. I bring this matter to the minister's attention because he will recall a time before 1939, as far back as 1937, when the air force was asking for men.