

Demobilization—Air Services

those that are accepted, if we need more for our permanent force or for the interim force we can start recruiting to fill up the ranks.

Mr. GREEN: How large an interim force is it intended to recruit?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): Up to 15,000.

Mr. GREEN: I suppose that of the 8,000 applications now in, a large percentage will not be accepted. About what percentage of those applications will be accepted?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): I cannot say yet, because the screening has not been completed; it is now in the course of being done. There would be a certain percentage not accepted. I might say that in addition we are accepting into the interim force on a special engagement certain personnel who will reach the age limit within a year or two. They come in on the distinct understanding that they will be retained only for a two-year period.

Mr. GREEN: What type of personnel would that be, officers or groundcrew?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): Officers or airmen who are just about reaching the age limit for retirement.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): In the interim force how many men will be flying personnel?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): It depends on the ratio between the flying and non-flying establishments. I would say roughly fifty per cent.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): Would it be fifty per cent, as high as that? I understood that it took nine men on the ground to keep one man in the air.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): I am wrong. It would be considerably less than fifty per cent.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): Would the minister not know that? The whole air force would be based on what the flying personnel was to be. That would be the foundation of the force, the starting point. Surely the minister has that information.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): The establishment will be laid down for each group, including officers and N.C.O.'s, in air and ground trades. The establishment will set out the numbers required in the various ground trades.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): I quite understand what the minister says, but it seems to me that the very basis of an air force is the flying personnel and that all the rest is built around

[Mr. C. W. G. Gibson.]

it. I may be entirely wrong, but it seems to me that the minister ought to be able to tell us how many squadrons we are to have and what the number of flying personnel in those squadrons will be.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): I have already given the committee the information as to the post-war force, and I think that is what my hon. friend is now discussing.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): Yes, the interim force.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): The permanent force that is planned at this time is on the basis of ten squadrons in this country.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: How many men are there in the overseas' squadrons at the present time?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): About 8,000.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: You are bringing them home as quickly as possible?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): No, they are with the occupational troops, and they will be there until their services can be dispensed with. There is no definite assurance just when they will come back.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: All the overseas men now in the air force are with the occupational troops? They are not just waiting transport home?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): Some are.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: How many?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): How many are actually overseas at the present time?

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Yes.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): The number overseas, as of November 15, was 25,118.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: How many of those do you intend to leave there until their work with the occupational force is completed?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): About 10,000.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: You will be bringing back the other 15,000 as quickly as possible?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): Yes.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Does this department or the army arrange for their transport?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): The army arranges for transportation and allocates to the air force the proportion to which we are entitled.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Then you want this \$129,000,000 to maintain the 25,000 you have