

Veterans Affairs? I raised the question with that minister and he said it would be given serious consideration.

Mr. MITCHELL: I shall be glad to do that.

Mr. GILLIS: The next point I should like to raise has to do with vacations with pay.

Mr. MITCHELL: I think I am a little ahead of my hon. friend on that. We have written to the minister of labour of Ontario.

Mr. GILLIS: Have you had any reply?

Mr. MITCHELL: Not yet, but I promise my hon. friend that I will send him a confidential copy as soon as I get one.

Item agreed to.

740. Departmental administration — further amount required, \$21,216.

Mr. MacINNIS: There was one point I wanted to raise and I tell the minister that this is my last point. An international labour office conference on merchant seamen affairs was held in Seattle during the early summer. A number of conventions affecting seamen were passed at that conference. I have not the full report, but I imagine that many of the conditions affecting Canadian merchant seamen are better than those provided under the conventions. One convention had to do with a minimum wage, which was fixed at £16 per month. I believe that is below the minimum standard in many countries. Another had to do with the establishment of an eight hour day at sea. I do not know just how far that is the law of Canada, and I should like the minister to indicate, if he can, what action the dominion government intends to take, and whether or not these conventions will be ratified. I take it that ships of Canadian registry plying between this and other countries come under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

Another convention had to do with the training of ships' cooks, requiring the issuance of certificates of efficiency. This is a most important matter, because most of what the sailors call "beefing" on the ships arises from having to eat food prepared by cooks who do not know how to cook.

There was another proposal—I do not know whether this was in the form of an agreement—with regard to a 112 hour fortnight, or a 56 hour week on coastal ships. My understanding is that the representatives of the seamen fought vigorously for this, and I should like the minister to indicate briefly just what is the government's intention.

Mr. MITCHELL: I am merely the agent who appoints delegates to the I.L.O. The Canada Shipping Act comes under the De-

partment of Transport. The matter of cooks would seem to be important from my hon. friend's point of view. We have already had conversations with the Department of Transport with the idea of setting up classes for these men. I suppose the question of the eight hour day will be given consideration when parliament prorogues. The hon. member knows that this meeting was held in Seattle only last June, and he can rest assured that the matters he has referred to will be brought to the attention of the Minister of Transport.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I should like to associate myself with the request of the hon. member for Cape Breton South that returned veterans who become involved in strikes such as those in progress at the Westinghouse and Firestone plants in Hamilton be given consideration. I received a telegram about this last night, and no doubt the minister also received a copy.

There is one other matter about which I dislike to bother the minister at the present time, but it does affect my constituency. I refer to the payment being made to prisoners of war working in the beet fields. How much are these prisoners of war paid per month for working in the beet fields in Lethbridge riding?

Mr. MITCHELL: They are paid 50 cents a day, in addition to the 25 cents a day provided for by the Geneva convention.

Mr. BLACKMORE: How much do they actually get per day?

Mr. MITCHELL: Of course that is not in cash; it is in kind.

Mr. BLACKMORE: They receive tickets with which they can purchase goods; is that the idea?

Mr. MITCHELL: Yes.

Mr. BLACKMORE: There is nothing that they can save? How much are the farmers required to pay?

Mr. MITCHELL: I have taken the position that under no circumstance shall prisoners of war be in unfair competition with normal civilian labour. We have laid down the policy that these men must be paid the going rates in the particular locality in which they are employed.

Mr. BLACKMORE: The department takes all the difference?

Mr. MITCHELL: We have been able to return about \$2,125,000 to the treasury arising out of the employment of prisoners of war.