

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): I can find out how many men there are. A missing persons bureau is operating in Europe at the present time; I am not sure how many we have attached to it, but I shall find out and let my hon. friend know.

Mr. GREEN: What is happening to the Canadians who are in the R.A.F.? Are there still any who are serving with that force, or what is being done?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): Does my hon. friend mean members of the R.C.A.F. attached to the R.A.F., or Canadians serving in the R.A.F.?

Mr. GREEN: I mean men who enlisted in Canada with the R.C.A.F. and then went to serve in the R.A.F.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): I understand that practically all the members of the R.C.A.F. who were attached to the R.A.F. have been withdrawn, and those who are still with the R.A.F. will have been withdrawn in a short time.

Mr. GREEN: Is any obstacle put in the way of their transferring back to the R.C.A.F.?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): They have never transferred from the R.C.A.F. They are still members of the R.C.A.F.

Mr. GREEN: Well, what about their being posted back?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): They do come back to the R.C.A.F.

Mr. GREEN: Is it government policy to get them all back to the R.C.A.F. as quickly as possible?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): As soon as their services can be dispensed with by the R.A.F. they automatically come back to the R.C.A.F., and are demobilized in the same way as other members of the forces are being demobilized.

Mr. GREEN: And the department is trying to get them back to the R.C.A.F.?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): It is not a case of coming back.

Mr. GREEN: The minister does not understand me. Is it the policy of the government to draw back all R.C.A.F. men who are serving in the R.A.F., to have them actually back with the R.C.A.F.?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): Yes, we are getting them back as rapidly as possible.

Mr. GREEN: What is the present situation with regard to air force personnel in the occupation forces in continental Europe, so far as numbers are concerned.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): The personnel in the occupation squadron is roughly 8,000; but we have another 2,000 in England at the headquarters and repatriation depot, and on administrative work.

Mr. GREEN: How are the personnel of the occupation force chosen? Are they all volunteers for that service?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): In the first instance certain squadrons were detailed for this work. Then, from those squadrons were removed the men with the longest service, who could be repatriated. Others are being brought back as their point score is reached. We are bringing them back from overseas on the point system, as it applies in the army. The men who volunteer for the interim force in this country may eventually go over to replace others who have not volunteered for the interim force and who wish to come home to be demobilized.

Mr. GREEN: Is it the policy of the government, then, to have the occupation force made up entirely of members of the interim force?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): It would be eventually to have them all interim force or permanent force. Anyone who joins the interim force now is entitled to remain in the permanent force, if he so desires.

Mr. GREEN: To date, what has been the progress in recruiting the interim force? As I understand it, there are no recruits being taken on yet for the permanent force. A man who wishes eventually to go into the permanent force can enlist now only with the interim force.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): Yes.

Mr. GREEN: What progress is being made in recruiting that interim force?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): Progress was slow at first because the men felt that they did not have enough information, and they did not want to take a chance of perhaps being kept on for two years and then let out. Consequently some very good men were inclined to go into civilian life. Then we gave them an opportunity of staying on for two years with the option of staying on if they so desired, and since then, applications have been coming in much more rapidly. I have not the exact figures, but up to the present time roughly 4,000 aircrew and 4,000 groundcrew have volunteered for the interim force.

Mr. GREEN: A total of 8,000?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): Yes. In addition, when we screen those, and pick out