

*Supply—Veterans Affairs*

director, and he assured me that the object aimed at by the hon. member is being carried out.

**Mr. Brooks:** I understand that settlers under the Veterans Land Act or the Soldier Settlement Act have to make payments at certain stated periods in the year. In New Brunswick, for instance, where the potato crop is gathered in the fall, occasion has arisen where a soldier settler has been more or less compelled to sell his crop in the fall in order to meet his obligations to the board, whereas if he had been allowed to hold the crop for a few months he might have got a better price. Is there any discretion left with the officials of the department to allow a soldier settler to hold his crop, when by doing so he could probably get a better price? My information is that they are more or less compelled to sell at some particular time in order to meet these payments.

**Mr. Gregg:** He has discretion. If it were held too long interest might accrue on it; but he has discretion.

**Mr. Brooks:** It might be a gamble, I understand.

Item agreed to.

## Demobilization and reconversion—

551. Post discharge rehabilitation benefits including out-of-work allowances, university and vocational training including the training of merchant seamen and salt water fishermen pensioners, awaiting returns allowances, temporarily incapacitated allowances and unemployment insurance contributions, \$28,850,000.

**Mr. MacInnis:** A number of matters are covered in this item. Would the minister give a breakdown or, if he has not the complete breakdown, would he give the information with respect to merchant seamen vocational training. How much of the item is allocated for that purpose?

**Mr. Gregg:** That subject comes more properly under the Department of Transport. However I placed on record earlier the figures the hon. member wants. The breakdown under the various headings is as follows:

Out of work benefits .....	\$ 50,000
Vocational and technical training ....	3,700,000
Awaiting returns .....	1,010,000
Temporarily incapacitated .....	10,000
University training .....	18,005,000
Unemployment insurance contributions .....	6,000,000
Transportation and travel for applicants for and recipients of rehabilitation benefits .....	75,000

**Mr. MacInnis:** Would vocational training for merchant seamen come under that item, or is there a separate item?

**Mr. Gregg:** All vocational training is included in that.

[Mr. Gregg.]

**Mr. MacInnis:** How many merchant seamen are receiving vocational training at the present time under this item?

**Mr. Gregg:** The number is 317.

**Mr. MacInnis:** There seems to be considerable dissatisfaction among merchant seamen with the administration of their vocational training. I am glad the Minister of Transport came in a moment ago because I had some correspondence with him during the summer on this matter. On discussing the matter with officials of the merchant seamen's organization I am convinced that they have a legitimate complaint. I believe that the Minister of Transport is interpreting the order in council too narrowly. On the other hand, it may be that I am interpreting it too broadly.

I mentioned in a letter that I wrote to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and which he passed on to the Minister of Transport that I felt that merchant seamen should be treated the same as persons who had served in the armed forces when vocational training was involved. The Minister of Transport replied that their training was under the Department of Labour. I have read the order in council through carefully and I can find no mention in it of the Department of Labour. The governing section, as to training, in P.C. 5983 of December 29, 1948, reads:

Sections 13, 14 and 17B of the Veterans Rehabilitation Act shall be deemed to apply *pari passu* to a merchant seaman receiving training under this order.

My knowledge of Latin is not extensive but I understand that means that their rehabilitation training shall be the same as that of men who served in the armed forces. I cannot find where the Department of Labour comes into the picture. The letter of May 12, 1949, from the Minister of Transport states:

I notice that you regard the training of merchant seamen as a return for services rendered on the same basis as educational grants for services in the armed forces, whereas, the intention of order in council 5983 is to provide rehabilitation in the form of vocational training through the Department of Labour to merchant seamen under thirty years of age, to avoid the disadvantages they would suffer when seeking shore employment in competition with older and more experienced men.

As I have said, I think that is a rather narrow interpretation of P.C. 5983. Another objection the seamen have is the shortness of the time for making application for training under the order in council. I understand the order came into effect on January 1, 1949, and applications had to be made within six months or before June 30, 1949. I have a letter in my file from a seaman who went to sea early in January, 1949, but who did not return to his home port until after