

I point out that we had contracts with various flying clubs to run elementary schools and train our pilots. They worked on contract. Later on, it was found that in some cases large sums of money had been made by these clubs, with the result that all these contracts were renegotiated and the profits were turned back to the government, the flying clubs being left with only a very small amount, to enable them to continue their operations after the war.

The hon. member has referred to the benefit fund. Those were funds belonging to the men themselves. They are canteen profits and items like that. Some of them were used, I understand, for the station benefit fund, and the balance went to the R.C.A.F. benevolent fund, a fund set up under the Companies Act. It is a private non-profit organization which holds these benevolent funds for the benefit of the airmen and their dependents. However, I shall get the information for the hon. member.

Mr. KNIGHT: Do I understand the minister to mean that the profits from these canteen funds will go as a grant to cadets. I approve of cadets, but I should like to know if those funds came from the pockets of air personnel. That must be so, if they are profits from canteen operations.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): They are profits from the sale of goods in canteens. It is felt that the money belongs to the men and that it should be disposed of in some way, instead of its being turned back to the government. These are canteen profits. Many of the men who put money in have left the camps. Generally they decide in what way they want to use it. Evidently in this instance they elected that some of it should go to other funds.

Mr. KNIGHT: Could the minister answer my question directly, in regard to whether the directors of that organization received any money in the form of salaries or expenses or services during the four or five years in which they were engaged with the company?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): I do not know about the directors. There is, of course, a civilian manager who would be paid. But whether the directors received any directors' fees, I cannot say. I shall have to find that out.

Mr. KNIGHT: Will the minister obtain that information for me?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): I shall, if I can get it. If it is available I shall obtain it; I think the records will show it.

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

Mr. KNIGHT: Why is it that this money is returned to the dominion government in respect of a company organized to train fliers? I take it that those men were trained at so much per head under contract. Why should that money be returned? I am not objecting to its being returned; I am simply asking for information.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): It was found that under the original agreement the clubs had made more money than the government felt they were entitled to keep. They were organized, not for the purpose of making profits, but for the purpose of doing this work to help the war effort. In each case the matter was taken up and negotiated with the companies. It is to the credit of these civilian companies that they agreed to turn back their profits, retaining in each case only a very modest sum with which to carry on operations.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Did the companies do this voluntarily, or upon the order of the government? Did the government audit their books?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): Yes.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Then an order was made that so much be returned?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): No, it was not an order; it was a case of negotiation with each of the companies.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: What was the total amount returned from such flying clubs across Canada?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): I cannot say. This arrangement has been going on for several years. However, the amount can be ascertained without difficulty, and I shall let the hon. member have it.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: I should like to have that return tabled, so that we may have an accounting of that amount.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): I can get it, yes.

Item agreed to.

Maintenance of overseas squadrons, \$129,018,454.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: May we have a breakdown of this amount?

Mr. McLURE: How many Canadian air force men have been posted overseas to the British air force search bureau, for missing air force personnel? I do not know whether this is the appropriate item under which to ask my question, but I could not find any other place.