

increases will be made at Vancouver and the ultimate plan is for a considerable increase in the air forces on the Pacific coast. Of course, the air force and naval expansion should go ahead concurrently, but I must admit that this is being done in a very modest way. However we are proceeding as fast as the economic resources at present available will permit us to proceed.

Mr. GREEN: Could the minister give the committee some idea as to what the cost would be of establishing proper air defences on the Pacific coast?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): It is difficult for me to answer that question. It would depend entirely upon how far the government in power would go in a policy of expansion. It would depend also upon the technical advice received from the air force officers who must see that there is created in Canada, not a large air force, but an air force sufficient to look after the defence of the dominion. I could not say offhand how much money this would cost, but I say that we are alive to the situation. I think the increase in the air force estimates indicates our appreciation of the situation.

Mr. GREEN: I think the minister is to be commended for increasing the vote, but surely he should know what a complete defensive program would cost.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): According to the recommendations of the technical officers, which are largely confidential, it would cost considerably more than the amount provided in this year's estimates. Personally, I would like to see the vote this year larger than it is. However I believe we have taken a step in the right direction. This increase in the air force vote will provide for only three new aeroplanes, most of the increase being for new ground services, for equipment and for the maintenance of personnel which was made possible by the vote submitted by my predecessor. Only three new Blackburn Sharks are provided for in the air force vote of this year.

Mr. GREEN: Has Canada any modern fighting planes?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): These three will be modern planes.

Mr. GREEN: But at the present time have we any really modern fighting planes?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): I would say they are very much limited in number; some of the planes that have been in the possession of the air force have been condemned in recent months and recalled from service. That is one of the most serious

features of the situation. We have, however, some modern fighting planes and we hope to obtain more. In the estimates this year there is provision for the replacement of some of the planes now in service, and that is where a large proportion of the vote has gone, namely, in overhauling and renewing some of the existing planes to make them efficient and modern.

Mr. GREEN: Have we any fighting planes that approach the modern British fighting planes?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): Of course these three new ones that are being provided for will be the most modern planes of their type.

Mr. GREEN: So that we shall have only three fighting planes in the whole of Canada.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): Last year some fairly modern ones were obtained.

Mr. GREEN: How many of these have we?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): About ten.

Mr. GREEN: So that after this vote is expended our effective fighting air force will comprise only ten planes.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): I would not admit that. We have overhauled existing planes and installed new engines in a great number of planes. If my hon. friend means the most modern planes in the world, what he says is largely true, for the economic resources of this country will not be equal for some years to anything like a real development in this direction. However, it is hoped now to provide as soon as we reasonably can a modest but effective air force for the dominion, a force such as is considered reasonable by the technical officers of the department.

Mr. GREEN: Does the air force get any fighting training such as artillery observation, army cooperation and other strictly military training?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): Yes, they do; they are getting progressively advanced modern training, and that is being increased from year to year.

Mr. GREEN: Do they not do considerable civil flying, such as mapping and work of that kind? What work does the air force do now?

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): The air force is divided into three departments. First, there is the Royal Canadian Air Force as such; second, there is the branch that carries