

Demobilization—Air Services

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): There are two items in this, parachutes and the air rescue equipment, \$215,000, in the programme for this year; also air dinghies and spares, \$2,500.

Mr. ADAMSON: No air-sea rescue craft?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): No, no new marine craft.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I should like to make a little statement before I put my question. I had a visit from a couple of air force personnel who were discharged about two weeks ago. These two boys wanted to start in business, but they were not able to procure the goods that they needed. They knew there were some of the particular goods that they needed at an airport that were not being used. They were surplus at that airport but they had not been turned over to War Assets Corporation. Is there any way whereby these goods could be made available to these boys so that they can start up in business?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): Not until the goods have been declared surplus. While some of this material may not be required at that station, an over-all survey must be made to find out if there is any requirement for them at another station. Some of the equipment may be required by one of the other services, namely, the army or the navy. They have to be given a chance to determine if they require it. If it is not required by the other services it is then declared surplus.

Mr. CAMPBELL: What action would these boys have to take to find out whether the goods could be made available to them?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): They would have to find out if it is being declared surplus, and then they should put in their offer to buy it through War Assets Corporation. If my hon. friend will let me have any information he has concerning the articles that these young men desire, I shall be glad to look into the matter and find out if any of that material is available for them.

Mr. BURTON: Has the minister or his department given any consideration to providing discharged personnel with a priority rating?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): If a priority can be given to discharged personnel—and I certainly would like to see it—it would have to be done by War Assets Corporation. We cannot do so in the air force ourselves.

Mr. BURTON: Has it been given any consideration?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): It certainly has been discussed, and representations

[Mr. Adamson.]

have been made by the legion and other bodies that returned service personnel should have priority in buying war assets.

Mr. ADAMSON: I should like to proceed one step farther with the air-sea rescue matter. A great deal of our operations must of necessity be done over large bodies of water. I am thinking of the service flown on the St. Lawrence and the service flown in Nova Scotia, and also on the Pacific coast. Surely there must be some method whereby aircraft which have become waterborne can be rescued, and whereby aircraft forced down on frozen ground or frozen lakes can be rescued as well. Is it not the responsibility of the service to see that some rescue organization is provided to save these men? If there is no service organization set up especially for rescue work, particularly in winter time when men may be forced down at out-of-the-way places, we are likely to have a great many more casualties than needs be, even under peace-time operational conditions.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): Of course we have surface marine craft in the service which are used for rescue purposes. We also have aircraft equipped with rubber dinghies and parachutes to be dropped to anyone who has crashed. We have no helicopters. As to the question of air-sea rescue, that is not being neglected; it is being taken up now by the navy, the air force and the mounted police, so that we shall have combined services which will be responsible for providing rescue craft should any plane be forced down, or should a ship be in distress. The three services are working on a plan to provide that service.

Mr. IRVINE: I wish to ask the minister about the road grader which is in the hands of the R.C.A.F. at the village of Dawson Creek. I believe it is to be declared surplus and passed over to War Assets Corporation. The village is anxious to purchase that machine, and wants to buy it directly from the R.C.A.F. before it is declared surplus. They have what they think is a very good claim to an opportunity to purchase it before it is removed from that area. The military have been doing a great deal of travelling over the streets of the village and have crushed them up pretty badly, so that the village would like a chance to buy that machine, and I was wondering if the minister would care to say whether there was any possibility of that being done before it passes into the hands of War Assets Corporation and is perhaps moved out of town and sold somewhere else.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): We have not the right to dispose of this material our-