

which we are passing to-day deal largely with expenses that were incurred during the war. Probably when the new estimates are taken up at the next session, the estimates which are in course of preparation to-day, they will in all likelihood contain greater provision for research work than were possible during war time.

Mr. KNIGHT: I am a little confused about the matter of responsibility. War Assets Corporation has been mentioned here to-night. Just for my own information I should like the minister to give me the plain truth. If it is proved, as I believe it has been abundantly proved, that in this country material belonging to the air force has been wantonly destroyed at the orders of someone, whose responsibility is it? I do not mean material such as technical apparatus out of aeroplanes, or radio equipment or things of that kind, which, however, I do not think should be destroyed; any hon. members who bought toys for their sons at Christmas time know the money value of little things like radios, but we shall leave those out. I presume the minister is directly responsible to the people of this country if it can be proved that material which is useful to the average citizen has been destroyed by the air force. Perhaps if I might cite one or two of these things I can make my position clear. Would the minister be directly responsible if it were proved that heavy wooden tables, the sort used for typewriters in offices, were cut from corner to corner with a buzz saw and thrown in a heap?

While I am on my feet let me say that I do not think there is anything so unpopular in this country as the waste of material or the waste of things. I fancy the government, the minister and the heads of the various departments having to do with war equipment have discovered this already. A woman who will quite cheerfully see \$1,000 or \$100,000 or \$1,000,000—what is a few dollars among friends?—wasted in government departments will weep salt tears at the destruction of a frying-pan or some other useful article, and in that I think she shows good sense, because after a good deal of thought she has come to a determination as to what real wealth consists of. Those of us who spent the depression years in the west know how valuable things are and how difficult it is to obtain warm blankets, boots and such things. I do not know whether or not these rumours are true. I know I have seen a pit where certain stuff was dug up, certain axes, pails and things like that. I know about little things of that kind. To what extent this wanton destruction

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

has gone on I do not know, but I know the country is anxious that such actions should not be repeated. Therefore I should like to know who is to shoulder this responsibility. Is it War Assets Corporation, or is it the minister? Has this stuff been destroyed? Let us have the facts, and put a stop to such action.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): The air force is responsible for the property it has on its books; and until it turns over that property to War Assets for disposal the air force remains responsible. From time to time I have heard rumours and stories of the destruction of valuable furniture and so on. Over and over again I have had investigations made in an attempt to get the details. On occasion I have come across instances of the destruction of furniture, but it was furniture that had been constructed by the men themselves from lumber they had picked up here and there around the camp. When the station was being closed this furniture, having no value, was reduced to scrap material. I have had no cases brought to my attention where valuable furniture of any type has been ruthlessly destroyed, as has been suggested from time to time. I would say that if anyone knows of any examples of that sort, not just from rumours but from first-hand information, I should be only too glad to get the information and to have these matters investigated. Certainly I do not want to have valuable property destroyed, any more than any other member of the community does.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I should like to tell the minister that I doubt if he is going to get any such ready cooperation as he suggests. I thought these matters were to be referred to the war expenditures committee, but apparently they are to be discussed here.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): They certainly are to be referred to the war expenditures committee.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I had occasion to visit an air depot, where I spoke personally to men from different parts of Canada. The minister has said he would like some first-hand information. These men were in uniform at that time, and are still in uniform. I remember one fellow had just come from Mossbank, Saskatchewan, where with other men he had been detailed to destroy flashlight bulbs. I have no intention of mentioning the name of this individual. At the time I asked him for written verification of what he had told me, but he refused. He said he had done that on another occasion, and he knew something about the pressure that could be brought to bear upon those fellows by their command-