

bothering a lot of other people. Some months ago I asked if anything could be done to improve the acoustics in this chamber and I understand some engineers were brought in to look over the situation. I wish to know what they reported and when we can expect that something will be done about the matter.

Mr. FOURNIER (Hull): We have had experts in to see if loud speakers can be installed in the chamber or if the acoustics can be improved. We have sent their report to the Speaker with our recommendation that loud speakers should be installed. We are waiting now to get in touch with Mr. Speaker and expect to proceed in the near future to experiment at all events.

Item agreed to.

At six o'clock the committee took recess.

After Recess

The committee resumed at eight o'clock.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

350. Marine services—arising out of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act, enforcement of federal statutes generally, and other incidental expenses, \$1,402,953.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): Perhaps I should have asked this question under item 348. The minister has been good enough to show me a report which I have not yet had time to read in full. Would he be kind enough to say something about this marine branch of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police?

Right Hon. L. S. ST. LAURENT (Minister of Justice): Before the war the Royal Canadian Mounted Police had a marine branch which was active in guarding the coasts and preventing smuggling in that manner. At the outbreak of war the members of this marine branch were incorporated in the naval services. With the surrender of the enemies and the diminution of naval war services, the necessity for resuming coast protection work reappeared, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police acquired certain units from the surplus naval equipment and took over as they were demobilized the personnel of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police which during the war had been serving with the navy. The amount of this vote is detailed at page 208 of the book of estimates: pay, \$376,951; housing and quarters, \$76,700; clothing and equipment, \$39,900; medical services, \$7,000, et cetera.

With respect to medical services, the situation is that these services used to be provided to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police by the

Department of National Health and Welfare, and are now being provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs; but for the purpose of having the appropriations made to the departments that get the services the practice is being instituted of each department asking parliament for the amount it expects to require for the service, even though that amount is paid by it for the service to another department. It is thus that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police do certain work for other departments and are reimbursed, because the cost of the service is provided for in the estimates of the other departments. We do likewise in connection with this item of medical services. There is also a substantial item which is in the demobilization and reconversion portion of the estimates and which provides for the cost of the equipment acquired directly from War Assets Corporation, but indirectly from surplus naval equipment. We were allowed to specify such things as we required and which were surplus to the requirements of the navy; for the purposes of accounting they were put through War Assets Corporation books, and we are asking parliament for an appropriation to pay the cost thereof to War Assets Corporation. The amount paid is really a bookkeeping transaction; it will go back to consolidated revenue. But the practice is being established of having each department ask parliament for the appropriation of the moneys required to perform the services for which it is responsible, even though it may apply to some other department for a part of those services.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): Are the conditions of service, specifically pay and allowances, *mutatis mutandis* the same for the police who are on the marine section as in the others?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: They are the same. They are classed by the officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in the proper categories, but pay and allowances are the same for all the classes, whether the work is being done on land or on sea.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): I see the commissioner sitting over there advising the minister, and I hope that the few words I have to say will not make him blush so hotly as to make this chamber unbearable in the next few minutes. I do not know anybody who has given better service to his country than the commissioner. I know of no one who has been more sympathetic throughout the course of his official life; I do not know of anybody who has gained more respect for his conduct and achievements than the commissioner has. I rose for the definite purpose