

Demobilization—Air Services

Mr. PEARKES: Have any of the interim force who have enlisted here in Canada been sent over to relieve the personnel who are now with the occupational force who do not wish to remain there but wish to be demobilized?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): If so, only in very exceptional cases, where the particular man's services are required, because while we have 15,000 men still waiting to come home there would be no use in sending additional men overseas to swell the population of Great Britain.

Mr. PEARKES: One final question: when might we expect to hear the terms of service for the permanent force?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): The Minister of National Defence announced that they would be available by the 31st March, for the three services.

Mr. PEARKES: That would apply to the R.C.A.F. as well?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): For the three services, yes.

Mr. SKEY: I should like to ask the minister if the R.C.A.F. are certain that all the personnel still overseas have been given an opportunity to volunteer for interim service, because I understand that this volunteering carries with it a certain amount of agreement to retain them in the permanent force if their services are desirable, and in my experience I know there is one particular group which was difficult to reach, namely, those R.C.A.F. members who are serving with the R.A.F. I should like to be sure that all of them have been covered by the R.C.A.F. in offering that opportunity to volunteer for this interim force.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): It has been given very wide publicity; and I will say this, that no member of the air force will be demobilized without having an opportunity of learning of this force and being given every opportunity of submitting his application for it.

Mr. CASE: I understand that the former air minister, the hon. member for Quebec South, had a system of promotion based on length of service. Is that still effective?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): That is in effect, provided that the member of the force meets the various standards required for promotion to the trade group to which he is to be advanced.

Mr. CASE: Will that be the policy of the administration with the interim force or the permanent force?

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

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): I am not prepared to say that at the present time, because the conditions of the permanent force are being considered. A new set-up for the permanent force is at present under consideration.

Item agreed to.

Sundries, \$4,132,067.

Mr. PEARKES: At the request of a large number of residents and farmers of the Saanich peninsula, I asked the minister about a month ago if he could open the highway which runs up the West Saanich peninsula and which was closed for a space of about 500 yards during the war. Now that war activities are over, the residents of the peninsula ask if that highway may be opened, because it will save them a distance of five miles of travel.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): I must apologize to my hon. friend. He asked me that before, and I was going to let him have a reply to-day. I will check on that again, because I should like to help in that regard if it is at all possible.

Mr. MACDONALD (Halifax): What use has been planned for the eastern passage airport at Halifax, which has been used during the war by the R.C.A.F. and also as an Atlantic terminal of the Trans-Canada Air Lines? What I particularly want to know is, will it be open now for private flying and local air lines?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): My hon. friend is speaking of Dartmouth?

Mr. MACDONALD (Halifax): Dartmouth, yes.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): That is one of our continuing operational stations.

Mr. MACDONALD (Halifax): Will it be used now for private flying and for local air lines, or do you count on having it used exclusively by the air force and by Trans-Canada?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): That will depend on what arrangements are made with the Department of Transport and what other facilities are available in that area.

Mr. MACDONALD (Halifax): It is a question which has arisen there in the last few days.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): I will look into it.

Mr. SKEY: I do not know whether this is the right point in this discussion to bring