

# MINISTER WARNS STRIKING FLYERS TO RESUME WORK

## Early Repatriation Will Be Denied Those Violating Discipline

Ottawa, Feb. 7.—(CP)—Air Minister Gibson to-day issued a warning to striking overseas R.C.A.F. personnel that "we cannot tolerate continuance of refusal to carry out normal duties" and "early repatriation will not be provided for those who take part in serious breaches of discipline."

More than 2,000 airmen were reported to be idle as the strike over repatriation delay spread to a second overseas station.

Col. Gibson talked to the Canadian Press in his conference room where he was discussing the situation with Air Marshal Robert Leckie, chief of air staff, and Air Marshal G. O. Johnson, overseas commander, and members of the air staff.

He referred to an overseas dispatch which said R.C.A.F. personnel on the Down Ampney station who struck this morning were incensed at his recent statement that four-fifths of the R.C.A.F.'s occupation force were volunteers.

### Rush Replacements

The four-fifths fraction had been attributed to Col. Gibson in an interview with the Canadian Press on his return from overseas in which he sought to stress the airmen had wanted to make sure he let it be known they were non-volunteers who had been selected for duty in the occupation force and their duty was necessary.

The fraction was wrong, Colonel Gibson said to-day. Actually the majority of the occupation force was composed of non-volunteers.

Colonel Gibson said that in his earlier interview with the Canadian Press he had noted dissatisfaction among airmen overseas and had frankly declared that aside from minor replacements the remainder of the occupation

force would have to wait until the general homeward movement started in June.

The minor replacement would consist of between 500 and 600 interim volunteers.

### Families Perplexed

He said the root of the trouble overseas seemed to be that non-volunteer airmen, especially in the ground crew trades, were receiving letters from home asking why they had volunteered for occupation service instead of coming home to join their families. The airmen resented this lack of knowledge about their non-volunteer status.

"These letter writers," said Colonel Gibson, "obviously were under the misapprehension that the men overseas had volunteered where actually they were selected for the service. The airmen wanted to make sure I let it be known that they were compulsorily selected for duty and their duty is necessary."

### Second Strike Begins

Odiham, Hampshire, England, Feb. 7. — (CP Cable) — The sit-down strike of 1,500 R.C.A.F. ground crew personnel here spread to a second R.C.A.F. base in Britain to-day as the original strikers demanded the resignation of Air Minister Colin Gibson.

The new strike broke out at Down Ampney, Gloucestershire, where R.C.A.F. personnel quit work shortly after noon. The number involved was not known immediately but R.C.A.F. headquarters in London said that only one section of the station was involved at the start although it anticipated that the work stoppage would spread quickly.

The Down Ampney strike was called in protest against delays in repatriation — the same reason given by ground crews at Odiham when they quit work Tuesday morning.

### Request Resignation

The Odiham strikers sent the following cable to the Air Minister:

"Your failure to provide replacements for all R.C.A.F. personnel overseas reflects your inadequacy to fulfil your duties as air minister. We respectfully ask your resignation.

"(Signed) Odiham Ground Crew."

As the new developments broke, a committee of the Odiham strikers was preparing to meet Group Capt. N. W. Timmerman, of Kingston, Ont., commander of the transport station. Results of the conference were expected to be released at about 5:30 p.m. G.M.T. (12:30 p.m. E.S.T.).

The complaints of the original strikers were echoed by a spokesman for the Down Ampney men, who said his fellows were incensed at Col. Gibson's statement that four-fifths of the R.C.A.F.'s occupation force in Germany are volunteers.

### Planes Grounded

Planes at the station were grounded again to-day with no one except officers and senior non-commissioned officers to service them. Essential services have been running smoothly, however. Officers on the station have been inconvenienced individually by lack of services but all are taking the situation with good humour.

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