

250 Belleville Residents Witness Fledgling Airmen At Work and Play at I.T.S.

Approximately 250 Belleville residents availed themselves of the opportunity Wednesday afternoon to see airmen at initial training when they visited No. 5 Initial Training School at Belleville during "open day" held specially to assist in the promotion of Canada's Fifth Victory Loan.

And those persons who availed themselves of that opportunity were well repaid for the time spent. They saw fledgling airmen in class rooms, taking specialized instruction in Link Trainers, in aircraft recognition, and taking physical training. They saw how they sleep, how they live, how they eat, and how they play.

Greeted at the station gates by smiling and courteous guides, visitors were first shown through the station drill hall and gymnasium, where flights of airmen were seen taking their P.T. under the direction of superior officers. Here too they saw a new addition to station equipment—a recently constructed canteen wing, which is built adjoining the drill hall. The canteen will prove an added convenience for station personnel in the hours after training is completed.

A visit to the airmen's lounge in the basement of their barracks indicated that the comfort of the boys during their leisure hours does not lack. Here cushy chesterfield chairs amid cosy surroundings provide an ideal spot for airmen to do a bit of reading following training hours.

Link Trainer Interesting.

Possibly one of the most interesting departments of the station visited were the Link Trainer rooms where with the use of this rather intricate equipment instructing officers may determine the potential airman's adaptability to actual flight. Link Trainers do not teach airmen to fly but every motion of aircraft can be simulated by the manipulation of the machine's controls. The operator can dive, bank to right or left, assume normal flight, throw his machine into a stall, and do many other antics.

Although not a flying station, No. 5 I.T.S. boasts of one aircraft—a fleet trainer—maintained in an enclosed corner of the drill hall. Here airmen become familiarized with the various aircraft controls and study instruments to be found in elementary trainers.

The equipment stores proved to be rather an interesting department. Here clothing equipment used by station personnel is kept

with articles being issued to the boys when needed for replenishment of their original record of kit. Upon graduation from an initial training school and before they are posted to elementary training school airmen are outfitted with a complete kit of flying clothes.

Visit Airmen's Mess.

A trip through the airmen's mess and through the kitchens where food is mass produced for personnel of the station demonstrated everything to be spic and span. And here the genial guide paid tribute to Section Officer Mitchell, one of the three members of the R.C.A.F. Women's Division at the station, who has charge of the airmen's mess. "Things have been a lot better since Section Officer Mitchell came to the station," intimated the airman guide. In his opinion women have a better knack of dishing up appetising food than do men.

Aircraft Recognition

One of the most important phases of training for aircrew personnel is that of aircraft recognition, it was revealed. And a brief visit to the department where this type of instruction was given again proved of much interest. Suspended from the ceiling on wires were models of the most popular types of aircraft, while pasted on the walls were pictures of practically every conceivable type of bomber and fighter craft.

A special projection machine with shutter speeds varying from one twenty-fifth of a second to a full second or more teaches alertness in recognition of aircraft pictures when flashed on the screen. Beginning with comparatively slow speeds, pictures of aircraft, both enemy and Allied, are flashed on the screen for brief scanning. At the conclusion of the course the men are required to identify craft in the brief one twenty-fifth second interval.

Health of the station personnel is also religiously looked after, it was indicated by a visit to the station hospital. Here also is the dental clinic, where defective teeth of station personnel are cared for after.

No divergence from the regular training schedule of the station was made for "open house," visitors seeing the boys in actual training classes. The day was arranged through the permission of Wing Commander A. J. Snetsinger, commanding officer of the station, and was under the direction of Squadron Leader Fortune.