

removed. It was our failure in the last five years to maintain or regain air parity with Germany. That is an old story, and it is a long story.

That statement carries with it Winston Churchill's criticism of the inaction of the British Government in preparing its defence.

The Opposition, and my right honourable friend, whom I call the leader of the Conservative party in this House despite the fact that that party ceased to appear before the people—for I still believe the old guard surrounding him can claim to form part of the Conservative party—have alleged that the Government lost two years in launching the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. This, I think, can be disproved, and I intend to try to disprove it. Great Britain's offer of May, 1938, made through its High Commissioner, Sir Francis Floud, was to train British air pilots in Canada. The Canadian Government said: "We do not like the form in which you present this proposal, because you seem to desire to come into the country and to organize a whole department of British Government on Canadian soil and under your own laws. But there is one thing which is quite satisfactory to us. We will give you all the facilities available and will work with you."

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: When was that answer given? Will the honourable gentleman tell us?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Yes. My right honourable friend cited from a newspaper. I will cite from the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan broadcast by the Right Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King on Sunday, December 17, 1939. We have the whole story there.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: It does not say when the answer was given.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I will see.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I have some proof, though, as to when it was given.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: For the satisfaction of my right honourable friend I will read from page 10 of the Prime Minister's address, one page ahead of where I had intended to read. He said:

It has been asserted that the air training plan would have been in existence before this had the present Government not declined to meet an earlier request of the United Kingdom Government for the training of British pilots in Canada. Within the past week or two, it has, for example, been said: "Had we agreed to the British proposal of two years ago for the establishment of air training facilities in Canada, to-day, Canada would be, in reality, the air training centre of the Empire."

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Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: Will the honourable gentleman allow me? He says the reply given to the British Government was that our facilities would be placed at their disposal, but I would draw his attention to the fact that we had no facilities to place at their disposal. That is proved by the delays that have taken place up to the present time.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: But we had as many facilities as Great Britain had, in Canada.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: They had none here.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: And we were talking about Canada.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: They had the personnel.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: My honourable friend says the answer given them was that we would not permit them to make any establishment in Canada unless it was under the control of the Canadian Government, but our facilities would be placed at their disposal. The fact is, though, that we had no facilities.

Hon. Mr. KING: Oh, yes. What about Trenton?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: My honourable friend will find that we had a whole staff.

Hon. Mr. GRIESBACH: No. That is absolute nonsense.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Will my honourable friend permit me to proceed? He can follow me.

The Prime Minister continued:

More recently it has been said that "so far as the Empire air training scheme is concerned this was proposed by the British nearly two years ago, but apparently discouraged by the King Government until after the outbreak of war."

I assume that what is referred to are certain informal, exploratory conversations concerning facilities for the training of British pilots in Canada which took place, not two years ago, but in May and June of last year.

It was in December, 1939, that the Prime Minister was speaking. He went on:

The facts were clearly set forth in a statement I subsequently made to Parliament.

The conversations did not relate to a joint air training plan.

That is what the Right Honourable the Prime Minister had alluded to earlier. He went on:

Their purpose was to ascertain whether it would be agreeable to the Canadian Government to have United Kingdom schools for the advanced training of pilots of the Royal Air Force established in Canada, under the authority and direction of the Air Ministry of the United Kingdom. It was represented that it was becoming increasingly difficult to secure in