

the British and French West Indies. We provided that assistance at once. The British government also urged upon us the importance of increasing air training, and naval and air facilities, and of sending trained airmen and mechanics overseas as soon as possible. We lost no time in doing as we were asked.

Meanwhile, we continued daily consultation with the British authorities. By September 19th, we had heard more of their plans, and were in a position to announce a more extended programme. We learned that technical men, doctors and engineers were needed for the land forces. In the light of this information we decided to concentrate on recruiting men of the types which were urgently and especially needed. We had already begun to organize and train an army division which was to be ready to proceed overseas as soon as it was required. On that day, the government decided to organize a second division. In order that we might devote our energy and strength to fill the needs of the allied forces, in the manner in which we had been asked, further general recruiting was postponed for the time being.

The Canadian Navy was already watching over our own coastal waters, Newfoundland and the West Indies. It was taking its share of convoy duty, of mine-sweeping, and of anti-submarine defence. We began immediately to construct anti-submarine and mine-sweeping craft. We also authorized a plan of intensified air training in Canada to provide a progressively increasing number of pilots and airmen. These things were planned and done, within three weeks of the outbreak of war, after consultation with, and in co-operation with, the British authorities. Is this, I ask, unpreparedness? I leave the answer to you.

#### The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

Within a month of the outbreak of war, the swift domination of Poland had demonstrated the decisive import-

ance of superior air power. The significance of the conquest, and the means by which it was accomplished, were not without their immediate effect. If the Germans believed that the war was to be won with air power, the Allies were determined, not only that theirs would be the superiority in air power, but that the enemy should know this as soon and as clearly as possible. Out of this determination, there emerged the epoch-making proposal for a gigantic plan for joint air training. On September 26th, it was presented by the British government to the other governments of the British Commonwealth. The vastness of its scope and power immediately fired the imagination of all. We in Canada, some months prior to the outbreak of war, had made an agreement with Britain for the advanced training of a definite number of British pilots in Royal Canadian Air Force establishments. That fact and the geographic advantages of our country, made Canada the logical centre for this great enterprise.

#### Agreement Concluded in Minimum of Time.

Our acceptance of the proposal in principle was prompt and decisive. The acceptance by Australia and New Zealand was equally so. By October 10th, I was able to announce that Missions were to be sent to Ottawa from the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, to work out all the complicated technical and financial details of the training plan. The British, Australian and New Zealand Missions arrived in due course. By November 27th, a basis of agreement had been reached. The approval of the governments of the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand had still to be obtained. On December 17th, I gave to you over the radio an outline of the plan, which, on that day, had been accepted by all four governments. I suggest to you that, having regard to the elements of time and space, the signing of that agreement is a tribute to the vigour and efficiency of our action.