

Commonwealth Air Training

The programme, as approved to date, involves an estimated expenditure of \$52,000,000. It should be completed this summer. Speed is important. Under the present circumstances it is a vital necessity. To achieve the highest success it should have—indeed it must have—the general support of the house and the country. In order that there may be no future misunderstanding I do stress this aspect.

Technical officers of the department have given every consideration to the preparation of these plans. In the light of their knowledge and experience and having regard to all the factors entering into a final decision, they are satisfied that these plans represent the best that can be evolved. On that principle they are being proceeded with; on that principle they must not be impeded.

I fully realize that it is not only possible but very highly probable that certain localities will not receive the favourable consideration they may have desired and expected. But having regard to the decisions of the technical officers and the reasons on which they are based, I beg that the public generally—boards of trade, municipal councils, all interested persons—will refrain from making further representations. These representations should not have and, may I say with all respect, will not have the effect of changing the decisions arrived at by the technical officers. In this respect I appeal as well to my colleagues in the house. I say, with full responsibility for my statement, to the public generally and to my colleagues, that over-energetic representations made in the interest of particular localities can serve only to retard progress and to divert from their duties officers already completely engrossed in work of primary and essential importance.

Every effort humanly possible must be—I have every confidence it will be—exerted towards the acceleration of this programme.

Our partners in the plan, our allies, realize the significance and urgency which lie behind the purpose of this programme.

In full sympathy with that purpose the Canadian people call for action and results. So do we. In the words of Herbert Morrison in England, "Let us go to it."

Hon. R. B. HANSON (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am disposed to congratulate the Minister of National Defence for Air (Mr. Power) on the comprehensive statement which he has made. I am glad he has done it in this way and has put all the information on *Hansard* so that hon. gentlemen may have an opportunity of studying it without having to seek it here and there and everywhere. Without any desire to interject a note of discord into the harmony

[Mr. Power.]

of this occasion, with respect to this announcement, which I think will be welcomed by the Canadian people, and which I respectfully suggest is a bit late, may I point out that the minister has not told us upon what basis the contract work is to be done. Perhaps he will make a supplementary statement.

Hon. C. D. HOWE (Minister of Munitions and Supply): In reply to my hon. friend's question, as to how the contracts are being awarded, I may inform him that the first, perhaps, thirty or forty contracts were awarded by competitive tender on a unit basis. It was then found that the entire programme would require all the equipment of the industry. The equipment available was tabulated, and an allocation was made on the basis of the equipment available in the hands of contractors. In other words, a contractor having a certain number of Letourneau graders is given an appropriate number of yards of grading. The work was also allocated on unit price, the position being that unit prices had been established in every section of the country, and our technical officers are of the opinion that they can allocate contracts fairly without tender, on the basis of those unit prices which had been established by tender in the same locality. I think we can say to-day that every contracting firm that has suitable equipment capable of completing an airport job is booked with work to capacity. As for the buildings, there again the difficulty was to obtain plans as quickly as the situation required. It was humanly impossible to get the drafting and blueprinting organized to enable plans to be broadcast to all parts of Canada for each training scheme. The purpose therefore is to obtain prices from contractors in the locality and to place the business having regard to the fact that here again unit prices have been established in each section of the country by wide competitive tenders, and that the government can be amply protected as to price.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

INQUIRY AS TO EXPEDITING NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

On the orders of the day:

Hon. R. B. HANSON (Leader of the Opposition): With reference to the statement which the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) made a few moments ago regarding the question of passports, may I suggest the advisability of expediting this matter? I have had representations, as no doubt the Prime Minister has had as Secretary of State for External Affairs, that the matter is very