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FROM: THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, OTTAWA.  
TO: THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS, LONDON.

Ottawa, 28th September, 1939.

Unnumbered message of September 26th. Following from Prime Minister for your Prime Minister, Begins:

1. I have received and discussed with colleagues the situation outlined in your telegram under reference.

2. We have noted the conclusion of the War Cabinet that a greatly enlarged air force, in combination with other military measures and economic pressure, has become of vital importance. We have, therefore, given immediate consideration to the scheme outlined in your telegram and in particular to the part Canada could play in recruiting and training pilots and other personnel on the cooperative plan proposed.

3. I can say at once that our Government fully agree that Canadian cooperation in this field would be particularly appropriate and probably the most effective in the military sphere which Canada could furnish. We would therefore be prepared to accept the scheme in principle.

4. There are necessarily certain important points which would have to be considered in determining what on our part may be possible.

5. The first requirement to ensure maximum effectiveness is the provision of sufficient planes to permit training the large numbers contemplated. Canadian aircraft production is only just beginning to expand and cannot hope to provide the aircraft necessary for home defence and the initial supply of intermediate and advanced training aircraft in time for the scheme to develop quickly. Therefore these initial aircraft for this scheme must come from Britain or the United States. Canadian production could probably look after subsequent replacement aircraft. Canada can provide a surplus of elementary trainers which would be available for other Dominions. Engines are not available in Canada at present and must be supplied from Britain or the United States. Canadian manufacture of engines, if started now, could hardly produce useful results in less than eighteen or twenty months. It would be desirable to consider whether it would be possible to expand Canadian production by the transfer of some United Kingdom plant to Canada.

As regards the United States, it is unlikely to provide either airframes or engines in large quantities for quick delivery, except by diversion to Canada of aircraft now ordered by Britain. In the event of the repeal of the arms embargo, United States plants will still be engaged far ahead with domestic and foreign orders, including orders from neutral countries. Some recent quotations indicate eighteen months as the minimum time for delivery of new orders, though we believe this could be speeded up.

The views of the United Kingdom Government on all the above points would be very helpful.

6. As to instructors available here, full details will be sent very shortly. It is however plain that the number at present