

The Prime Minister further stated, on the 17th of December last:

The United Kingdom Government had informed us that, concerning present and future requirements, it feels that participation in an air training scheme would provide for more effective assistance towards an ultimate victory than any other form of military co-operation which Canada could give.

The Government has been fortunate in enlisting the services of a well-known industrialist, who volunteered to serve his country during the war as Acting Deputy Minister of National Defence for Air Services. I refer to Mr. James S. Duncan, who is General Manager of the Massey-Harris Company. With permission of the House I will quote some statements that were recently made by Mr. Duncan about the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, as it appeared to him after a careful study. It seems to me his views should carry all the more weight because he is an outsider, a prominent industrial executive who, as Acting Deputy Minister of his department, has the duty of examining all the various elements under his command. My right honourable friend and others who are critical of the Government's actions may feel that statements emanating from members of the Government are less convincing than any made by an outsider, like Mr. Duncan. I feel that much of my right honourable friend's criticism has been based upon information that he has obtained from persons other than those who are, as we say, working on the job. He has apparently not seen fit to go for his information to the source of the facts, to question the actual officials concerned—some of whom, perhaps, were appointed by his Government—from whom he could get first-hand knowledge, which would no doubt completely satisfy him. So in the circumstances I think it would be well worth while for me to read what was said by Mr. Duncan after he had made a study of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. Speaking at Ottawa on May 3 to the executive of the Canadian Weekly Newspapers' Association, he said:

I am here to tell you about one of the greatest, perhaps the greatest task to which Canada has ever set her hand . . . the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, with which it is my great privilege to have become recently associated. . . . It is essential that we attain not only air equality with our enemies, but air supremacy—supremacy in men, in aircraft, in equipment, in training and morale.

To attain this end, it was felt that superimposed upon the greatly expanded training effort of each of the countries concerned, a joint effort should be made by Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada to set up in this Dominion facilities to train, in the advanced stages, and in the most economic and efficient manner, the personnel of their

respective air forces in order to fit them to take up service overseas in defence of our common heritage of freedom and democracy. It will provide our Empire with an ever-increasing flow of highly trained pilots, air observers, and air gunners.

Canada would have found it difficult indeed to set in motion a training plan of such vast proportions had it not been for the highly competent and experienced staff officers, mostly all of whom have graduated from the Royal Air Force Staff College in England and who were serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force at the outbreak of the war, and the quality of the officers carefully and intensively trained under their orders during the preceding twelve months. The close co-operation of Great Britain's Air Ministry, upon whose suggestions the Joint Air Training Plan has largely been moulded, and the guidance and co-operation of their officers have also proven to be of inestimable value.

The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan has been established upon a solid foundation. Aerodromes are being surveyed, developed, or are already in operation. Buildings of forty or more different types and designs are either in the process of being constructed or already terminated. Hangars are being erected. Sites are being selected. Public buildings or institutions are being taken over. Thousands upon thousands of men are at work. Every province of the Dominion is playing its part or will be called upon to do so. In a word, the greatest single enterprise Canada has ever known is launched and well under way.

To help you visualize the proportions of this organization, I shall outline briefly some of the principal units which go to make it up:

- 4 training commands, situated respectively at Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Regina,
- 2 manning depots,
- 20 R.C.A.F. recruiting centres,
- 3 initial training schools,
- 26 elementary flying training schools,
- 16 service flying training schools,
- 10 air observers' schools,
- 10 bombing and gunnery schools,
- 2 air navigation schools,
- 4 wireless schools,
- 4 repair depots,
- 4 equipment depots,

and several other important units, such as a technical training school and air armament school, a central flying school, etc.

In all, provision has been made for approximately 110 formations and units which will be established throughout the Dominion from Nova Scotia to British Columbia, and when the plan is in full operation, over 40,000 officers, airmen and civilians will be required to man the various schools, equipment depots, repair depots, and other units.

It is well to point out at this stage that the word "school" is far from representing what is generally accepted by this term in civilian life. Like most things connected with this enterprise, it represents something much more vast.

A service flying training school, for instance, comprises:

- (a) 3 aerodromes, situated at a distance of between 5 and 25 miles from one another, with landing strips 3,000 feet long and 750 feet wide.
- (b) 45 acres of building area.
- (c) 38 buildings, including 5 hangars.
- (d) A practice bombing range of a 660-yard radius.