

there are to be thirty-eight operational squadrons. I see the minister has said that for every Canadian in a Canadian squadron there are eleven Canadians in the Royal Air Force.

Mr. POWER: Aircrew only.

Mr. ADAMSON: Yes, aircrew only. I was speaking of overseas aircrew. The question of the establishment of a separate Royal Canadian Air Force has been dealt with by as good a compromise as could be achieved under the system. There were definite opponents of purely Canadian squadrons. Some of the pilots were very happy in the United Kingdom, or English squadrons, the esprit de corps of which was very high, and the Canadian aircrew in many instances objected to being transferred to a purely Canadian air force. On the other hand, there were some squadrons where perhaps the commanding officer was not quite as understanding, from the Canadian point of view, and where Canadians longed to become part of a Canadian squadron. So that the compromise of thirty-eight squadrons is probably a good one.

Before we go on to consider the whole plan, we must remember that any talk about sovereignty in war is dangerous. We must not forget that the formation of the joint air training plan was delayed a whole year because the government of Canada objected, and objected strongly—in fact it was a prohibition—to the United Kingdom having their own air squadrons or air training operations in Canada. That shows a point of view which I hope we in Canada have got over for all time. It shows the colonial mind at work. I suggest that had we established the joint air training plan when it was first mentioned, we would have had a year or six months in hand.

There is one other point with regard to the training of aircrew in Canada. I suggest that more emphasis where possible be put on the training of South American pilots in Canada. There are a number of Mexican and South American nationals who would make excellent aircrew. Some of them have been trained in Canada, but I believe that, for the future, the training of aircrews in Canada, particularly South American aircrew, would be a step in the right direction for hemispheric solidarity. The South American republics look to the United States for all their air training and as the leader in North America. I believe a great deal of good could be done if we took a number of these South American citizens for

training; that is, of course, if there is space in the schools to train them. I mention that for this reason. It has been found that a great many of our new Canadians, particularly of Slav descent, have shown a flair for the air which was absolutely unbelievable. A good many Czechoslovakians and men of central European descent have proved amazingly efficient pilots and aircrew, and I believe an extension of this air training plan to include some of the South American nationals would be a step in the right direction. It would show South America that Canada also was a power in the air in her own right.

We now come to the hardy annual, the question of commissions for aircrew. It has been brought up before. The minister has given it consideration, but nothing has as yet been done. We still have the distinction, slight though it may be; nevertheless it exists on the ground, of the sergeant-pilot and the commissioned aircrew. I suggest to the minister that aircrew should all be considered in the light either of ensigns or of cadets, call them what you will, until they have made a certain number of operational flights, either operational bombing flights or, if they are army cooperation squadrons, a number of sorties against the enemy, and that then they all be automatically commissioned. I realize that these barriers of officer and non-commissioned officer are being broken down, and I know the difficulty exists because we have our squadrons and personnel training or fighting with the Royal Air Force. But I believe that if we made that suggestion strongly enough, the whole air force of the empire would and could be put on that basis.

I should like to say a word with regard to prisoners of war. When a man falls into enemy hands and a commission or promotion subsequently goes through, is that promotion recognized by the enemy? I understand that it is in Germany, but that so far Italy has refused to recognize promotions, whether granted at the time of the operation or subsequently thereto. I understand that the air force has recommended the use of cracked high octane gasoline for training purposes in Canada, and I should like to know if this is the fact.

What percentage of the training received by members of aircrews is given in Canada. Do these men fly combat planes in Canada, or is that training given only in the United Kingdom? It is quite likely that we shall be engaged in air operations against Japan which will require long overseas operational flights over the Pacific ocean. What steps are being taken in Canada to train air-sea rescue crews?