

the ancient partner upon whom we have leaned all these years is not to be permitted to provide effective means for maintaining, not her life but the life of an empire and commonwealth, then I say it is time for us to take stock of the situation.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: There has been no statement to the effect that effective means would not be provided, but the means that have been suggested by the right hon. leader of the opposition are means that would be destructive of all effective cooperation.

Mr. BENNETT: To say that any partner in our commonwealth should not, if it so desired, be given every opportunity to establish training fields for the safety, not of themselves but of the commonwealth, is destructive of the whole theory of 1926 and 1930. We said that we were freely associated with one another, that we were partners, and now we are told that if we try to act as partners we will be violating some unheard of national right.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: There was nothing in the statement I have made to justify any such inference.

Mr. BENNETT: It justifies no other inference than that. It can be interpreted in only one sense. The language is clear, it is unambiguous—for a change. But, sir, I do not believe that the people of this country share that view. Every man who has read the history of modern warfare and knows what is being prepared realizes that the bombers of to-day will make the British islands the very forefront of attack in the next war. They are threatened, and where are they to prepare for their defence, which is our defence? Not in those little islands. And if they want to come here and train and prepare to send their bombers across the ocean if the occasion arises, should they not be permitted gladly to do so and be welcomed? For what they are saving is our civilization, and Canada—and Canada, I repeat. The idea of the first minister of Canada suggesting that this is a Tory trick, when the article to which reference was made by his minister sitting beside him is from the Vancouver Sun, a Liberal paper, of the seventh day of July, 1937, almost a year ago.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: A Tory trick, just the same.

Mr. BENNETT: There we have it. What a spectacle!

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: What a spectacle. That is what I say.

[Mr. Bennett.]

Mr. BENNETT: The idea of the first minister of this country, when the Liberal organ of Vancouver makes this statement and the Minister of National Defence was so impressed with it that he at once instituted proceedings for the purpose of ascertaining its origin—he so stated here this morning, and he got a report. That statement in the Vancouver Sun did not come from me. I heard of it as others did, and I was as shocked as the Vancouver Sun apparently was. I knew nothing of it. I wonder how many members of this house knew anything about its origin. I do not know yet, and the Minister of National Defence says he is unable to find out. But there it was. And to-day we are told that it is inconsistent with our national sovereignty that the Dominion of Canada should permit training fields and centres to be established here by one of our partners for the defence of our common empire, a commonwealth of nations.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: We establish our own.

Mr. BENNETT: We have not the facilities to establish our own to offer to them. I know something of the difficulties even with regard to these 125 men to which reference has been made. I know the clamour of Canadians to join that force. I have had them come to me, not by ones and twos but many more, asking what I could do to assist them to get across the water and join the Royal Air Force. We made provision for a few men training at Trenton and for the medical examination of Canadians going to join the air force in England and we put a quota on those who desired to join the Royal Air Force. And now we are told it would be inconsistent with national sovereignty that we should permit a partner to provide for a contingency that means our life. Do not let us have any misunderstanding about it. When Britain goes we go. Who stands if freedom fall; who dies if England lives? If it was the last word I ever uttered in this house or with the last breath in my body I would say that no Canadian is worthy of his great heritage and his great traditions and his magnificent hope of the future who would deny to the old partner who established us the right in this country to create those centres which she may not have at home to preserve her life and the life of every man who enjoys freedom and liberty under the protecting aegis of that flag.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): I knew the flag would be the last word.

Mr. BENNETT: Certainly and proudly so.