

LIBRARY C270160

CANADA AND THE WAR

said that it was only within the preceding 24 hours that he had received a communication from his government in reference to the matter of which he wished to speak. I did not gather from anything said that there was so much as a suggestion of any plan for the general training of British pilots in Canada. Partnership in the Empire was never mentioned. The British Government, as I understood it, wished to explore the possibility of sending to Canada, for further training in Canada, some British air pilots who had already received training in the United Kingdom. The kind of training mentioned was advanced training in long distance flying and gunnery practice. Canada had been thought of for this class of training because of two very obvious advantages. We possessed large, safe, open spaces not to be found in Great Britain. We were much closer to the British Isles than any other British Dominion. No definite proposal or request was made by Sir Francis Floud. The British government wished to find out, by way of preliminary exploration whether there would be any objection to such training in Canada, in establishments to be owned, maintained, and controlled by the government of the United Kingdom.

Question One Not of Facilities but of Administration.

I pointed out to the British High Commissioner that, apart from possible controversy which might arise, for the government of the United Kingdom to own, maintain, control and direct any air training establishments in Canada, would involve important questions of jurisdiction and administration. I explained that our position as a free nation in the British Commonwealth demanded that all military establishments in

LIBRARY C270161

CANADA AND THE WAR

Canada should be under the control of the Canadian Government. With that stand, I believe all true Canadians will agree.

To the idea of facilities being provided in Canada for the advanced training of British air pilots, I took no exception whatever. On the contrary, with the approval of my colleagues in the Cabinet, I offered, on behalf of the Canadian government, to have such facilities provided at once under the control of the Canadian Department of National Defence. All this was fully explained by myself in the House of Commons on July 1st, 1938, almost immediately after the conversations themselves had taken place. The facts are on record. They are true, uncontradicted, and uncontradictable. No person in this Dominion, has any excuse whatsoever for misrepresenting them. The records of the British Parliament, no less than our own, confirm the truth of the statements I am making.

Canada's Offer Cordially Welcomed by the British Government.

Our offer was cordially welcomed by the British government. On July 7th, 1938, in the British House of Commons, Mr. Attlee, the Leader of the Opposition, asked Sir Kingsley Wood, the Secretary of State for Air, whether his attention had been drawn to the statement of the Prime Minister of Canada that the Dominion government were prepared, in connection with their own establishments, to help in affording facilities for the training of pilots for the Royal Air Force, and whether he had any statement to make.

To this question Sir Kingsley Wood replied as follows: "Yes, Sir, an offer to this effect has been communicated to