

Dissolution of Parliament

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. MANION: My hon. friends had better not applaud too soon. He said that we would, in our establishments here, give them the right to train. Where were our establishments? Where were our personnel? Where were our machines? We did not have any establishments or machines. Look up the speech of the ex-Minister of National Defence (Mr. Mackenzie) in the House of Commons last year and see how many fighting planes we had. We did not have any. We did not have any facilities at all to train the British.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Then we would have been no further ahead.

Mr. MANION: Well, I will deal with that too. The ex-minister of national defence, in a speech in this house which I would quote if I had had time to look up *Hansard*, said that the government were so anxious to cooperate with the British—reinforcing what the Prime Minister said—that we were going to train 126—I think that was the number—of pilots here a year, and all we were going to permit the British to send across were fifty a year. Those were his words as reported in *Hansard*—fifty a year. Yet Sir Kingsley Wood, the head of the air defence force in Britain, made the statement in October—I believe it was on October 9, because I had been studying this matter, and getting thoroughly shocked as I studied it—that what the British had hoped was that there would be 25,000 pilots trained a year. And we were going to train fifty. That is what the ex-minister of national defence stated. At that rate it would have taken us five hundred years to provide them with one year's supply of pilots. That is the proposal; those figures are taken from the actual record. Fifty years, is it? Well, it does not matter, but I think if you divide fifty into 25,000 you have, not fifty but five hundred. Some of my hon. friends laughed a little too soon. Sometimes the loud laugh speaks the vacant mind.

When the British were facing an unscrupulous man like Hitler; when it was known that Hitler had at least twice as many planes as the British and the French combined; when the British appealed to the right hon. gentleman, in the face of that emergency, with war in the offing, to permit the establishment of air-training schools in Canada to train pilots for Britain and the empire, and the right hon. gentleman refused, he did something which made him unfit to remain Prime Minister of this country.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I just wish to make perfectly clear that I refused nothing

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

except the matter of who was to administer the schools and by whom they were to be provided.

Mr. MANION: I will go on with that. The right hon. gentleman says he refused nothing. But on December 17 he said that the proposal which he now brings forward, and which he calls the British commonwealth air-training plan, is in effect merely a continuation of the original proposal. But this is not a British commonwealth air-training plan at all. It is largely a Canadian air-training plan. The British proposed to come over here and establish schools for their flying pilots, to be maintained at their own expense. Let us see what would have happened if the right hon. gentleman had said "yes" to them at that time, as I say he should have done. They would have come over here and established their air-training schools. They would have brought over their British young men to train at the rate of 25,000 a year. If that figure is an exaggeration, it is Sir Kingsley Wood's exaggeration, not mine. If the right hon. gentleman cares to look up his speech of December 17, he will see that he himself said that we were going to train many thousands a year. So apparently many thousands a year are needed: Sir Kingsley Wood said 25,000.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): My hon. friend evidently has not learned what the suggestion related to. It did not relate to the training of pilots generally; it related to an advanced stage of development. That advanced stage we promised that we would provide in accordance with the wishes of the British government.

Mr. MANION: Yes; and we have provided a lot of it! We have not even got started providing it yet. The British would have come over here in their thousands to train. Then, when we wanted our young men—

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): May I inform my hon. friend that last year, when the \$6,000,000 vote was passed by this house, the British themselves only asked us to train fifty pilots.

Mr. MANION: I remember the minister saying that, but I remember also that Sir Kingsley Wood had said that 25,000 must be trained annually, and I pointed out last March that fifty was merely a fleabite. It was not a very elegant term, but I used it. I say that the British would have sent over thousands to train here, and then, when we wanted our men trained, we could have sent them to the same schools to have them properly trained at little cost to us. On top of that, it would have meant the building up