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CANADA AND THE WAR

## The Training of British Pilots and the Joint Air Training Plan

MACKENZIE KING REPLIES  
TO DR. MANION

The fourth of a series of radio addresses delivered by Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King from Ottawa, 8th March, 1940.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As you are aware, the joint air training plan now being developed has made Canada, for the purpose of final victory in the present war, a pivotal centre of the British Commonwealth. The facts pertaining to this great enterprise are of record and beyond question. Nevertheless, in an attempt to discredit the government, the Leader of the Opposition and his associates keep on misstating the facts concerning the training of British pilots in Canada and Canada's vital contribution to the Plan itself. Misrepresentation of the kind cannot assist the prosecution of Canada's war effort. It may do an infinite amount of harm to the Allied cause.

### False Representations Respecting Training of British Pilots in Canada.

Speaking in the House of Commons on January the 25th of this very year, Dr. Manion used the following words: "The

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fact is that by July 1, 1938—personally, I think it goes back to 1937—the British had been over here pleading with the Prime Minister to give them the right as one of the partners in the Empire to establish air training schools in Canada to train British pilots." As recently as last night, this statement was repeated by Dr. Manion in a nation-wide broadcast. Since it was originally made, it has been re-asserted and re-echoed by his candidates and supporters throughout the Dominion.

Speaking as Prime Minister of Canada, I wish to say at once that the statement is wholly incorrect. Once again, I ask Dr. Manion to specify who the British were who came to plead with me, when they came over here, and exactly what was the nature of their pleading. No British came to Canada pleading with the Prime Minister in 1937, in 1938, or in any other year. In the year 1937, I had no conversation with anyone on the possibility of establishing air training schools in Canada to train British pilots. In 1938, I had no conversation with anyone, on any phase of the subject, until one particular matter was brought up for consideration in May of that year by the then High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, Sir Francis Floud.

### A True Statement of the Matter.

I challenge Dr. Manion and all his associates, known and anonymous, to identify anyone, other than Sir Francis Floud, who, prior to July 1st, 1938, was authorized by the British Government to discuss with me any matter pertaining to the training of British pilots in Canada. Sir Francis Floud had not come to Ottawa for any such purpose. He had been in Ottawa for four years as High Commissioner of the United Kingdom. When Sir Francis came to confer with me, he

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W.L.M. King Papers, Memoranda and Notes, 1940-1950,  
MG 26 J 4, Volume 385, pages C269841-C270648

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