

Eleven thousand does not seem so very great a number in a war which has engulfed so many million lives. Nevertheless every single one of these gallant lads taken away by the grisly mechanism of war was the pride and hope of some Canadian family. Every single life sacrificed represents an irreparable loss to the Canadian nation. Those boys came from families in every walk of life, from rich and poor alike, from those in high placed and those in low, from the farm, from the city, from high school and college and university. We ourselves in this house have not been immune, six of our members have lost their dearest and best. They were a cross section of the youth of a democracy. The least professional of soldiers, the most gallant of citizens. Living their young lives under varying conditions, in different atmospheres in this Canada of such divergent views and interests. They yet found a common patriotism and a common purpose.

They, on the threshold of their manhood, developed a magnanimity of soul and a lofty and heroic love of country. Looking at the future as they did, with the wisdom of ages peering out of boyish eyes, they counted the cost, they calculated the risk, yet remained through it all serene and undaunted. Let their selfless endeavour, their common patriotism, their unswerving purpose be an example to us in our Canadian task.

Now I have already said we have reached the peak of our expansion but let it not be understood that we have reached anything near the peak of our deployment against the enemy. Not all of the thousands of men we have overseas have as yet been in action, in fact many thousands are still awaiting their turn to meet the enemy in operational squadrons or immediately behind in operational training squadrons, in conversion squadrons or in finished schools or reception depots. Many, many thousands more are going through the plan, or as instructors. Our front line strength will rise higher and higher for months to come even in spite of the heavy casualties which we are bound to incur.

It is far from my wish to make any boastful statement about the part which Canada is playing in the war. It has, however, been borne upon me that the interests of the alliance as a whole may be prejudiced if its other members are left in ignorance of the Canadian share in the great events which are unfolding.

The United Kingdom government and our American allies also have the right to know that Canada is playing her part.

It is for that reason that I should like before resuming my seat to give a summary of Canada's part in the air war.

The air training plan was conceived, set up, organized, and is being carried on with one object in view, to obtain and maintain air superiority over the enemy. We have that thanks largely to commonwealth efforts and those of our allies the United States and Russia.

The next step, and I believe the allies are close to it, is complete, final, conclusive and lasting air supremacy in every theatre of war, so that our planes will flash through the skies of any part of Europe unharmed and unmolested. This seemingly unattainable goal seems now to be almost within our reach. The next few months should settle that issue. The immediate cost may be heavy, I fear it will be, but it will bring immeasurably nearer that final and ultimate goal, victory.

We Canadians have, starting from 4,000 men, raised an air force of over 200,000. We have in the midst of the throes of rapid expansion, trained 114,000 men in ground work, as instructors, staff men, mechanics, engineers and in fifty different trades. We have graduated from our flying schools, 86,000 men to fly and fight the planes of the commonwealth and the R.A.F.; more than half the total graduates in the empire forces. Of these 86,000, 48,000 were our own Canadians recruited, enlisted and trained by us.

We have managed and administered this vast enterprise with our own Canadian men and women. We have staffed it largely with our own forces, service and civilian. We have paid for a large part of this enterprise out of our own funds. We have equipped it largely with our own material, the product of our own factories, and all the while we were building in this country and in the neighbouring islands and territories defensive installations and aerodromes, and organizing an air defence system both on the ground and in the sky, in conjunction with our partner in defence of this north American continent. When this hemisphere was threatened by the advance of the yellow barbarians to American territory in the Aleutians, we were in a position in those anxious days after Pearl Harbor to offer and render assistance to our immeasurably more powerful neighbour. By our pre-Pearl Harbor activities in the construction of the northwest air staging route and the coastal chain of aerodromes, we prepared the way for his rapid transit to Alaska of troops, of munitions, of planes and materials of war.

On the east coast, we early saw the advantages for transport of aircraft to Europe and defence purposes of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the liability too if left undefended. From bases in the maritimes, Labrador and Newfoundland, we gave air coverage to