

closing of a certain number of training units, and schools in Canada, beginning with the Royal Air Force transferred schools. The process will be deliberate and extended over many months, and the reduction of training facilities will be geared to the requisite flow of pupils through the plan.

These changes indicate that we have reached the end of our air training expansion.

To quote General George Marshall, chief of staff of the United States army, in his report to the secretary of war, in his explanation of somewhat similar changes made in the United States army organization—

Another factor is now operating to our advantage. We are reaching the end of the expansion; already it has been possible to reduce many training installations to a purely maintenance basis to furnish replacements for the present strength of the army. It also has been practicable, and it is highly desirable to lengthen the basic training period for soldiers and to extend the period of training for officer candidates; and most important of all, it is no longer necessary to drain units of their best officers and men to furnish trained cadres for new organizations or students for the officer candidates and technical schools.

This quotation refers to the United States army generally, but perhaps more particularly to the United States army air force, which has only recently closed seventy air training establishments.

The partners in the joint air training plan have agreed to modify our training programme so as to bring the greatest possible weight of air strength to bear on the German enemy during the critical year of the war.

Let it be well understood the expansion of training has been completed, but the expansion of the forces on the fighting fronts is still going on. That expansion will be provided for by the thousands now in the training scheme, the reduced training capacity being amply sufficient to look after the replacements when the front line cadre is filled.

We are not proposing a winding-up of the air training plan, even progressively, on the contrary we are providing, and have agreed with the United Kingdom for a continuation of the plan after March, 1945, the date on which the 1942 agreement expires, but a continuation with a reduced output, which reduced output will not be noticeable or in effect before eighteen months hence.

We are rolling up our training forces as we would a carpet. By this process of rolling from the rear, personnel will be automatically massed forward to increase the striking power of the fighting front.

Now, I certainly will be asked as to what schools will be closed and when. I have already stated that the Royal Air Force transferred schools will be the first to close,

beginning about midsummer and running well into next year. With respect to others, there are many factors to be taken into consideration. Whether the property is leased or owned. Whether it is required for civilian purposes. A school in Quebec city, located in a leased property, for instance, will be closed this month. Another school located in an institution kindly placed at our disposal by the government of Ontario, and now required for agricultural purposes, will be returned as soon as possible.

Other factors to be considered will be travelling expense between types of schools; costs of operation, disturbance to civilian economy, geographical location; air training conditions, fog area or obscure visibility, air congestion, etc.

There are two methods which might be followed in bringing about this reduction. We might reduce our production by simply cutting down the number of trainees in each school and so keeping them all or nearly all open. On the other hand we might close and place on a care and maintenance basis a certain number of schools. The first course only brings about a postponement and besides is far more costly and less effective in our war effort. It keeps up overhead, staff, instructors, travelling expenses, etc., and holds people in Canada who would be better employed overseas. We have chosen the second alternative as being honest and efficient, even if, for the moment, less popular.

As to the use to which these can be put in the future, four government agencies are interested,—

(1) The post-war civil aviation committee, and from the standpoint of the public it is the most interested because the first question to be asked will be what use can be made of these expensive facilities in the development of post-war civil aviation. This committee, under the cabinet war committee, has already been charged with the study of possible post-war civilian utilization of aerodromes constructed for service purposes, when they are no longer required by the service.

(2) The second government agency is the Department of Labour, which has on several occasions written to ask that it be notified when any schools or institutions become vacant so that it may plan their use for vocational training and accommodation of trainees, and other purposes.

(3) Then there is the Department of Pensions and National Health, which may require accommodation for vocational training and perhaps for convalescent homes or rehabilitation purposes generally.