

Both its Brigades and Air Division are trained fighting formations, second to none.

At the same time we have been pressing on with measures for the defence of North America in close co-operation with the United States. We have had delays. Who hasn't? Our delays have not been due to any failure to recognize the seriousness of the threat or the importance of the task. They have been due to the fact that there was neither radar nor communications equipment nor aircraft in existence or even designed to do the job. Had we pressed forward with what we had four years ago we would now have an obsolete system and obsolete aircraft. Instead of which we are building up defences of the most modern character and they are being built up as fast as can be done, having regard to all our other operations. They will be progressively added to as new means and measures become available and desirable.

A number of events have occurred during the last few months which have drawn attention to the tremendous advances made in aviation, and all of them within the memories of at least some of us here.

The first flight by a machine that was heavier than air occurred just fifty years ago. Its anniversary was attended by the presence of John A. McCurdy, who was the first aviator to fly in the British Empire and who also was, as far as we know, the first man to fly an aircraft for military purposes. I had the honour of unveiling a cairn to commemorate this at Petawawa last year. I have been informed, but have not been able to verify it, that Mr. McCurdy is the senior pilot living in the world today.

Only in the last two or three years have we seen the production of aircraft designed to cross the barrier and fly and fight at speeds beyond sound. During the past twelve months virtually every record for speed and distance has been broken. Our own "Comet" has flown from Goose Bay to London in five hours and fifteen minutes, from Winnipeg to Ottawa in two hours and ten minutes.

Increases in speed have been accompanied by great increases in weight-carrying capacity and range.

They have also been accompanied by great increases in the international and national control of flying, in the completeness and accuracy of weather information, in devices for safe landing and take-off, in aerial beacons and beams along which aircraft are guided home, and perhaps above all, these improvements have been accompanied in the range and efficiency of radar of numerous types to fulfil the varied requirements.

However, in the last resort flying is done by men. More than two-thirds of the accidents with known causes are due to human failure rather than mechanical failure. It is on the quality of the pilot, the competence of the navigator, the efficiency of the engineer that safety of flight depends, just as it is on the efficiency and completeness of the work of the groundcrew that mechanical safety depends.