

Second, I should like to sound a note of appreciation of the character of the students and the men. I know one boy intimately. Nearly two years before the war he was determined to fly, and he thought he could learn more rapidly if he made his own plane. Accordingly he got his blueprint and his tools and started to work. However, just as he had his plane ready for the fabric, a recruiting officer for the air force came along and the boy fell for it at once, just as quick as a snap. Within the year he was made a sergeant, but he was not satisfied because he had been promised a course in flying. So that he reverted, and a little later in the city of Ottawa he received his wings. Since then, he has been just like a boy going out to play a big rugby game. He delights in his work and is extremely proud of his officers. I have never heard from any one of the Fort William boys, the pilots, pilot officers or any of them, one word of criticism of their senior officers that they did not get a square deal. I think our minister should also be told this, that they respect him for his driving force—I did not call it "Power". More than that, they respect him on account of his courtesy, his thoroughness, his ability to get things done.

Our air force pilots have given a splendid account of themselves. They feel they have a job to do. I have told the story once before in this house of the young lad who left his training centre where he was in training for an officer and fought his way to get overseas. Finally he got overseas, but just before he left he said, "Mother, don't worry. The cause is bigger than I am".

The third thing I wish to mention about the air force is the casualty lists, and this is a tender subject with anybody who knows something about it. There have been, I believe, more casualties in the air force than in any other branch of the service. Look at the losses! The material loss is great, yes. Those giant bombers cannot be made in a short time out of nothing, but their loss is as nothing compared with the loss of the young pilots who give their lives for a cause they deem worthy. One thing about the casualty lists which has pleased me immensely when I have been allowed to call at a home to try to bring a steadying influence upon those who perhaps were beginning to doubt whether good would come out of it all or not, was the letters that I was able to read from those in the chaplain service and especially letters from squadron leaders. I must say that I was surprised. The character of these officers

showed itself in the letters they wrote. Sympathy, kindness, courage and helpfulness came from them to the men and women who had lost their boys.

I should like to make the same request of the minister for air that I made of the Minister of National Defence. I think that when a boy has lost his mother, when the boy had not the joy and happiness of a young wife, his stepmother or his aunt or his sister or his father, should have the honour, and the little bit of comfort that goes with it, of having the silver cross bestowed upon them. I pay my tribute in a feeble way, though to the best of my ability, to the efficiency of the air force. We all through Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific say to the minister for air, "Well done; carry on, and God bless you."

The CHAIRMAN: Before we proceed any further with this summary, I should like to receive a direction from the minister and the committee as to the procedure we should adopt in order to proceed with efficiency and diligence. On the previous estimates, namely, those of the Minister of National Defence (Army), we followed the summary item by item, and I wish to know if it is the wish of the committee and the minister to do the same with respect to these estimates.

Mr. POWER: I understood, before the war appropriation estimates came on that it was intended to proceed by way of discussing them item by item. Personally, of course, I would very much prefer that we discuss them in three separate items, corresponding to the three separate organizations which go to make up the air force. It would be much simpler for me. That is to say, we could discuss at one time the joint empire training establishment; when that has been thoroughly discussed, go on to overseas, and when that has been fully dealt with, proceed to western hemisphere operations or home war. It would make for much less confusion. But I am entirely in the hands of the committee, and since we have started in the army estimates by following the items as they are listed, I am quite willing to proceed in that way.

Mr. STIRLING: Since the break-down has been placed before us in this form, it seems to me that it would be better to adhere to it, in spite of the minister's desire to consider the whole large question under three heads. I think if we were to attempt to do that now, having had the experience of the army estimates, and with this before us, it would make confusion.