

he could carry on. His wife had not received her separation allowance. Along toward Christmas we heard that these separation allowances were being paid, but the mothers are still without their allowances.

Many of the boys who enlisted were on relief, and they owed no gratitude to this government for anything which had been done to relieve their distress or to give them work and wages. These boys had the guts to join the army to fight for Canada; they had the decency to come forward and offer their lives for democracy; yet in many instances the mothers of these boys who were on relief, partly on account of the inactivity of the former minister of labour and the government generally in not solving this problem, are being faced with hunger. I have in my office scores, perhaps hundreds, of pitiful and pathetic letters from mothers of boys who are now in the army. Many of these mothers have pleaded with me not to let it be known publicly that they are not being treated decently by this government. They did not want their boys overseas to know of the suffering they are going through because their sons offered their lives. This matter was cleared up only a few days ago. Rather, it is not all cleared up, but a statement was issued by the Department of National Defence containing the promise to straighten out this disgraceful condition. This government never does anything without being kicked into doing it.

The wheat sale to Russia was another example. Wheat was sold to Russia, and it was only after protests were made across Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific that this government acted. As usual, it had to be kicked into doing it.

There was no defence for this country. What is even worse, there were no plans for defence or for equipment. Yet as far back as 1936, if not earlier, the defence association of Canada was pleading with this government to get ready for the inevitable war. They asked the government not only to prepare defence plans but to prepare defences. Yet practically nothing was done in regard to that. That is why the record of this government has been so deplorable, indeed so disgraceful.

I have one other matter to touch upon and then I shall have concluded for the present. The right hon. gentleman through the mouth of his excellency has made reference to the British commonwealth air-training plan. On December 17 the right hon. gentleman boasted over the radio that this plan was the result of an original proposal by the British to establish air-training schools in Canada for British pilots. The 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. It was pointed out that Great Britain was in distress. It was pointed out that the fog in that country cut down the number of possible flying hours and caused innumerable accidents. It was pointed out that in case of war with Germany that country would be able to send across the hordes of aeroplanes with which she was so well equipped to bomb the aeroplane manufacturing plants and the aerodromes of the British.

All this was pointed out to the Prime Minister in 1937. The then Minister of National Defence referred to the fact that the *Vancouver Sun*, a Liberal organ, in the issue of July 7, 1937, I think it was, made the statement that this government had fumbled the issue—that is the word they used—of helping the British to establish air-training schools in this country.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I just wish to say, in reply to my hon. friend that what I said in this house on July 1 and which is on *Hansard* is literally and absolutely the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; and what I said in my broadcast is based on my statement, and I stand by it as absolutely correct.

Mr. MANION: I am not going to question that; but if the right hon. gentleman had wanted to be fair he should have been fair this afternoon and permitted me to bring down to this chamber my papers, and I would have shown the facts out of his own mouth. He admitted himself—he admitted it over the radio on December 17—that the British had made exploratory proposals to the government—verbal, of course, nothing written, because there was great play on the word “request.” Senator Dandurand in the other chamber in 1938, in a speech occupying half a page of *Hansard*, used the word “request” nine or ten times to emphasize the point that the British had not made any request. But the fact remains, and the Prime Minister admits it in his own words, that the British, in informal exploratory conversations, proposed establishing schools for the training of British air pilots in Canada.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: We said that we would provide the facilities ourselves and give them the opportunities here, but that the administration must be under the government of Canada, not under the government of the United Kingdom.