

came in December. Up to that time we had already been told to turn out aircrew as fast as we could and as well as we could, and we did that. We fulfilled our contract. We fulfilled our contract so well that provision which had been made not only for expansion but for replacements was found to be adequate. When making provision, it is all very well to talk of planning, but it must be understood that planning in war, particularly planning the production of a certain type of human material, is somewhat more difficult than the ordinary planning for the turning out of shells or machines or something of that kind, and casualty rates must be taken into consideration. The high command figured that the casualties would be at a certain rate and they asked us to produce not only for expansion but for replacements up to that rate.

Fortunately, the allies obtained air superiority earlier than they had anticipated, with the result that the German air force is not so dangerous from the point of view of casualties as had been expected and that we have fewer losses in combat than were expected, particularly among pilots. We turned at one time, in 1941 and 1942, from combat with fighter pilots and fighter aeroplanes to heavy bombing. At that time heavy bombers usually carried a first and a second pilot, and it was decided by the higher command that they did not need a second pilot, so that they replaced him by a flight engineer or a wireless operator air gunner, and so on.

Most of our training originally was devoted to pilots. Now we find there is a surplus of pilots. When a bomber is shot down the loss is only one pilot; there are seven other members of the crew, but only one pilot. The German fighter air force have not been taking the heavy part in the fighting that was anticipated, and the result is that our casualties, thank God, have not been anything like what had been feared, so that at the present time there are more pilots trained than were expected. That is number one.

The margin that was allowed for is still there. It is not any indication that there is any intention on the part of the allies or on the part of the United Kingdom, where most of these aircrew go, that there shall be a slackening of the war effort. On the contrary, there is, first, the circumstance that we still have a surplus of pilots, and, second, that this year is to be the critical year of the war, and the United Kingdom and its allies are endeavouring to concentrate, so far as they can, all their fighting power in the front line.

As this committee well knows, there is an immense training organization behind the

fighting line. This training organization can be pushed forward and utilized at the proper time.

As I said, there have been two changes. The first change took place in December when the Royal Air Force announced the desire to close a certain number of their establishments. St. Catharines in Ontario, Stanley in Nova Scotia, Caron in Saskatchewan, and Cap de la Madeleine in Quebec, were closed. All these except Caron were Royal Canadian Air Force stations. But in order to keep schools going in western Canada we closed R.C.A.F. stations in eastern Canada. Neepawa, which was an R.A.F. school, Estevan which was an R.A.F. school, North Battleford, Swift Current, Weyburn and Assiniboia were all to be closed, because the R.A.F. decided they wanted to bring their men home. By a reshuffle and by a shift of schools we decided to close the R.C.A.F. school in Moncton, because there was already certain congestion on that aerodrome owing to transportation work which was being carried on. We moved Moncton to Battleford, and we decided to close St. Hubert near Montreal, because there was also certain congestion there, and to fill the R.A.F. station in western Canada, Weyburn. Therefore there was no dislocation in western Canada; but we did close Stanley, Cap de la Madeleine, St. Hubert and Moncton in eastern Canada.

Then came the decision to hold an empire training conference in order to determine what was to be done after March, 1945. We have to hold a conference months in advance in order to lay out the plans for the purchase of aircraft, for the entrance into the scheme of trainees and so on, because aircraft cannot be purchased off the shelf. They must be ordered from eighteen months to two years in advance. Therefore we decided to have a conference with our other partners of the empire some time in the month of March. Before that, as a preliminary to the conference the air ministry asked if it would not be a good idea for the Right Hon. Mr. Balfour to come here to discuss these matters with us. He came here and after a certain amount of discussion announced to us that the United Kingdom government had decided to close a further number of their schools, in fact had decided to close all the R.A.F. schools properly so-called. They had decided to close them progressively during the course of the next year.

Mr. GRAYDON: How many would there be?

Mr. POWER: Oh, from twenty to twenty-five. He also advised us that the higher command had come to the conclusion that the