

R.A.F. TRAINING IN CANADA

Following is the text of a broadcast by Capt. the Rt. Hon. H.H. Balfour, M.P., after the 6 o'clock news tonight in the B.B.C. Home Service:-

The Battle of Air Training is being fought by day and night. It never ceases, and it must always be won, for victory in the Battle of Training, by producing enough pilots and air crews, is a first essential to victory in the air against the enemy in every theatre of war.

At the Ottawa Training Conference, the partners of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan agreed to renew until 1945, and to expand still more, the existing Training Scheme which already has surpassed all expectations. We secured the training of tens of thousands of young men each year and the supply of the necessary thousands of training aircraft. We agreed to spend nearly one-and-a-half billion dollars on this training, and the United Kingdom Government have made themselves responsible for some half of this total.

I must pay a tribute to the Royal Canadian Air Force and Royal Air Force staffs of the flying schools. Every trained man wants to go to the battlefield rather than be relegated to the role of teaching others. But for the operation of an Air Force a vast back ground organisation of training is essential, and in Canada this is carried out in undisturbed surroundings. Some of those responsible for running the schools have already fought the enemy; others will get their turn; but all are wholeheartedly, enthusiastically and with great patience devoting themselves to their allotted role of instructors.

It is indeed true that Canada has given wings to the Empire. We have over there thousands of Royal Air Force ground personnel working on maintenance of school aircraft. I want to tell mothers, wives, sisters or sweethearts of any of those airmen who may be listening to me to-night that our men are well cared for and are doing a grand job. They have their tour of duty and then you will see them back in this war area. Letters in war-time are not always easy or regular; but if you don't hear don't be anxious. Remember that silence need not mean trouble, but rather know that your man is doing a grand job, "all out" on his work.

The young men who are pupils learning to pilot or to be members of an aircrew have first-class instruction and are seeing the Dominion of Canada putting forth in every direction a wonderful war effort. They are themselves part of Canada's predominant war achievement. You can be reassured that your lad is fortunate in his opportunity, for he will come back not only rich in experience of flying but with wider knowledge of a young and great land.

My flying tour took me through the United States, where we have a number of schools for British pupils run under the supervision of the United States Army Air Corps. I went to California, where last year the weather allowed one school to fly three hundred and sixty-three days in the year. I met a boy from Motherwell, Glasgow, training on the plains of Texas. I saw a Sussex lad, enjoying life in Alabama; a London boy in Georgia. They all said the life they are leading is a good one. They fly hard; they work hard; and then, not very often because work must come first, they get some leave. When this happens the doors of countless American homes are open to them. American hospitality is proverbial, but it has surpassed itself in a determination to make them feel at home. Our boys, too, are playing their part, for everywhere I heard praise of them; and, indeed, each one is proving himself an ambassador for our country.

It was an inspiring twenty-five thousand mile tour because of the conviction, rammed home so forcibly, that the Axis can have no human material to compare with this youth of free peoples gladly serving in the cause of freedom.

Though they are far away from home, they are happy in preparing to do their part - and you can be happy in this knowledge.