

35,000 Trained Airmen To Be Developed Yearly Under Revised Air Plan

Toronto Given Major Role as Total of Canadian Schools Boosted to 71 - To Use Malton

Ottawa, Jan. 23 (Special) — Toronto's place in the Empire air-training program becomes definitely more important with the disclosure of Defense Minister Rogers that the number of elementary flying training schools has been doubled. A total of 77 are to be scattered over the Dominion.

For administrative purposes the Royal Canadian Air Force has been divided into two sections, one of which might be called the training section, which includes the whole of the Empire air-training plan, and the other the operating section, which includes home defense and overseas forces. Both are under Air Vice-Marshal G. M. Croil, A.F.C., with headquarters at Ottawa.

For the actual training plan there are two commands, No. 1 serving Eastern Canada, No. 2 serving Western Canada. Each command is divided into two training groups and a maintenance group. The western command is under Air Commodore A. E. Godfrey, with headquarters at Victoria, and the eastern command under Air Commodore N. R. Anderson, with headquarters at Halifax. The largest of these groups is No. 1, the Central Ontario group, headed by Air Commodore A. A. L. Cuffe, with headquarters in Toronto. No. 2 group takes in Eastern Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes; No. 3 group, which is in No. 2 (Western) command, will operate in Alberta and British Columbia. No. 4 group, also in No. 2 (Western) command, will take care of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario.

Previously, the plan had called for 13 elementary flying schools, but now this number had been upped to 26, but only half the size of those originally planned. At these schools the would-be pilots learn to fly, first dual, and then solo. Corresponding stage in training for the R.C.A.F. has previously taken place at the flying clubs across Canada. Smaller size of the schools will permit the use of smaller airports and reduce the amount of new construction work needed, it is felt. The change brings the number of schools needed up to 71 from a previous 58, and in addition six schools for the training of instructors, technicians and ground staff required to keep the training plan in operation will be opened.

Once under full operation, the plan will make it possible to turn out 35,000 trained pilots, gunners and observers each year to join the fighting forces of the Empire, Mr. Rogers pointed out.

MALTON SCHOOL

Contracts have already been called for seven new schools, according to Transport Minister Howe. These are

an elementary flying school and an air observer school at Malton air port, near Toronto; elementary flying schools at Windsor Mills, Que., Fort William and London, Ont.; an air observer school at Edmonton and a service flying school at Camp Borden.

Announcement is to be made shortly of the establishment of two new wireless schools, one in Ontario and one in Quebec. An initial training school is already established at the Eglinton Hunt Club in Toronto, and will be ready for occupancy within a month. These establishments represent the first stage of the program which will proceed, step by step, according to a pre-arranged timetable, until the maximum contemplated training capacity is reached in three years' time.

For example, it is expected that 1,000 students will enter the Eglinton Hunt Club school when the building is ready. There they will take four weeks' initial training. Those selected as pilots in the four weeks of training will then proceed to one of the elementary flying schools at Malton, Windsor Mills, the head of the lakes or London, Ont. Those chosen to be air observers will start a 12-week specialized course of training either at Edmonton or another school to be established, and those to be trained as air gunners—who must also be wireless operators—will proceed to one of the two wireless schools soon to be announced.

The time at which the various schools will go into operation necessarily varies, but the schools devoted to training staff and ground personnel are in several cases operating already. Most of the schools for staff and instructors are to be located in Central Ontario.

The technical training school at St. Thomas is operating at about one-third its capacity at present, with 700 men receiving instruction and 300 teaching. The air armament school at Trenton Air Base is operating at about half its capacity. The flying instructors' school is at present at Trenton, but soon is to be moved to Camp Borden.

CENTRAL ONTARIO PLAN

In the largest training group, No. 1, will be the following establishments for training ground staff and instructors: A school of administration, an equipment and accounting training school, an air armament school (at Trenton), a flying instructors' school (at Trenton), a technical training school (at St. Thomas).

Establishments for the training plan itself in this command will be the initial training school at Eglinton Hunt Club, several elementary flying training schools (including London and Malton); four service flying schools (including Camp Borden); three air observer schools; four

bombing and gunnery schools, one air navigation school and one wireless school.

Other establishments in the group will be a repair depot, a technical detachment, a manning depot, and nine recruiting units.

Both eastern and western commands include bomber fighter and artillery co-operation squadrons on coastal defense duty.

Calling up of men recruited for the ground staff of the Empire air training scheme is going ahead at the rate of 300 a week, and general recruiting for service overseas will start very soon, according to Air Vice-Marshal Croil, chief of the air staff.

In spite of the impressive number to be called—it was stated two weeks ago that 40,000 men would be required to keep the plan in operation—the air chief expressed confidence that there would be no difficulty in securing the men of the type required. A recent check of applications indicated that already some 25,000 Canadian youths are seeking to join the Royal Canadian Air Force.

ENLISTMENT BASIS

In addition to the numbers of young men who will be trained as fighting flyers about 40,000 will be

required to man the various training schools. Enlistments will be on the following basis:—

Air crews:

Men to be trained as pilots, air observers or air gunners for overseas service. They must have high school entrance education, be between 18 and 26 years old, and pass a stiff physical examination continually subject to recheck.

Ground crews:

Enlisted men: An estimated 30,000 men will be required. They will be chosen according to special qualifications for the tasks they are to perform—mechanics, electrical experience and the like. The age requirement is between 18 and 40 years with a strict physical examination.

Civilians to assist on the ground: An estimated 6,000 men will be required. They may be men outside the age limit for enlisted ground crew men or those who could not pass the physical test.

Some 2,700 officers who have had experience in flying, wireless or other experience, as instructors, will be required. Many of them will be those trained in the Royal Canadian Air Force and ready to take over their duties.

For wireless training telegraph operators in commercial jobs will be enlisted when available, and those who have practised wireless as amateurs. The age limit for non-flying administrative duties will be 18 to 49 years.

The air marshal said there would be openings for unskilled youths in the air crews, but at first there will be few openings for them in the ground forces.

DEMOCRATIC LINES

The training set-up is planned along democratic lines, he added. All recruits for air crews will enlist as airmen. In the four weeks in the initial course they will be divided into pilots, air observers and air gunners. The pilots will be trained 28 weeks, the air observers 26 weeks and the air gunners 24 weeks.

At the end of the training they will be listed in the pool. Only then will some of them be given commissions and the others will be non-commissioned officers, according to their showing during training.

Bennett J. Roberts has taken over the duties of supervising expenditures in connection with the air

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