

300 a Week Being Enlisted for Staff to Operate Scheme

STANDARDS SET

(By R. A. FARQUHARSON.)

(Staff Writer, The Globe and Mail.)

Ottawa, Jan. 22.—Thousands of Canadians waiting to serve in the air force will be called to the colors progressively, Defense Minister Norman Rogers told a press conference today.

Over 25,000 Canadians have already volunteered for service and some 300 a week are now being enlisted to serve in manning the schools for the Commonwealth Air Training Plan. All told, the schools will require 30,000 airmen, plus 2,700 officers and 6,000 civilians.

The first contingent of instructors from Great Britain—about 200 of various ranks—will arrive in Canada any day now, with more to follow. It will be some time before the first airmen come from Australia and New Zealand.

All the planes required for the air training plan—some 4,300—have been ordered from factories in Canada, Great Britain and the United States.

Civilians to Be Engaged.

Canadians who cannot pass the rigid air force medical examinations and age restrictions and yet are qualified to aid in the training program, will get their chance. They will be engaged as civilians.

With Mr. Rogers in answering a barrage of questions on Canada's air plans were Hon. C. D. Howe, Minister of Transport; Air Vice-Marshal G. M. Croil, Chief of the Air Staff, who will be in charge of

the air training plan; Deputy Minister for Air, Col. K. S. MacLachlan, and B. J. Roberts, just appointed Financial Adviser to the Government in connection with the plan.

Under the Commonwealth plan, the air force will be democratic to an extent never before achieved by a military organization. The future officers will enlist in exactly the same way that privates enlist in the army. They will not get commissions until they show special aptitudes for work as officers.

They will all be paid \$1.30 a day when they enlist and this will go up to \$2.05 a day for leading aircraftsmen.

The pilots will graduate as sergeants, Group B; observers as acting-sergeants, Group C; wireless operators and air gunners as leading aircraftsmen.

Some pilots and some observers will be eligible for commissions depending upon their aptitude and education.

School Requirements.

On enlistment, all must have at least their high school entrance examinations. Flying officers will require junior matriculation. Non-flying officers must have at least senior matriculation as they are required for the executive type of position.

It still takes ten men on the ground for every plane aloft, and that proportion holds good in the training schools as well as in the field. Non-flying airmen are to be recruited from 18 to 40 years of age; flying airmen from 18 to 26, but if the applicant has flown as much as 100 hours he can squeeze in up to 39 years. Non-flying officers have to be between 18 and 49.

Recruits with the ambition and the first requirements to become pilots will get the same initial training for four weeks as air observers and air gunners.

Progressive tests and medical examinations will tell the rest of the story as to what role they will play in the air force. Right up to the final tests the air man will not be sure whether he will become a pilot or be put in one of the other branches. It takes twenty-eight weeks to train a pilot, twenty-six weeks for an air observer, and twenty-four weeks for air gunners who are also radio operators.

Use Telegraph Operators.

All the available radio operators in the country are being pressed into service, and all the telegraph operators as well.

For ground crews the air force is counting greatly on the technical schools of the country. There are now 1,700 boys who had passed medical examinations receiving technical education that answers to the requirements laid down by the air force. These and many more will be needed.

There is plenty of room in the air force for men with no special training provided they have good physique and good intelligence. These men will become the air crews.

Perhaps 1,000 student recruits will enter the initial training school at the Eglinton Hunt Club when it is ready. When their four weeks' initial training is completed those selected as pilots will proceed to one of the elementary flying schools at Malton, Windsor Mills, the head of the lakes or London.

Those chosen for training as air observers will start twelve weeks' specialized training at either Edmonton or another school 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.

Double Number, Reduce Size.

Previously the plan called for thirteen elementary flying schools but today's announcement called for twenty-six, half the size of those originally planned. At these schools pilots learn to fly, first dual and then solo. The corresponding stage in training for the Royal Canadian Air Force has hitherto taken place at the flying clubs.

Smaller size of the schools will permit the use of smaller fields and reduce the amount of new construction needed.

The change brings the number of schools actually required in the training program up to seventy-one against fifty-eight. In addition, there will be six schools for the training of instructors, technicians and ground staff, required to keep the big training plan in operation.

B. J. Roberts, who has taken over the duties of supervising expenditures in connection with the air training plan, was former Assistant Deputy Finance Minister. Mr. Roberts became a commissioner of the National Harbors Board in 1936, which post he vacated temporarily on his appointment as financial adviser to the Canadian Government under the air training plan.

His selection followed consultation with the United Kingdom, Australian and New Zealand Governments, who participate in financing the undertaking.

The agreement between the four participating nations provided for a financial adviser in carrying out the administration of the scheme, who would pass on all proposals for expenditures. His decisions could be appealed to the Defense Minister.

"Any reports," the agreement set out, "made by the financial adviser shall be made available by the Government of Canada to all other Governments concerned, and these latter shall be entitled to obtain from the financial adviser information on all matters affecting the cost of the scheme."

A native of Newfoundland, Mr. Roberts is a graduate of the University of Toronto, and first came to Ottawa as private secretary to Sir Thomas White, then Minister of Finance.