

# FOUNDATION OF AIR FORCE SOUNDLY LAID BEFORE WAR

## Selective System in Use During Peace-Time Is Beneficial

### PROGRESS IS STEADY

Ottawa, Jan. 17. — (CP) — The Royal Canadian Air Force has tripled since the war started and still is growing by leaps and bounds. That the structure is steady and the growth orderly arises from the foundation having been soundly laid in time of peace.

#### None Can Criticize

Even a year ago Canada had an air force that seemed a puny thing beside the air arm of any leading world power but none could criticize the efficiency of this peace-time force. Man for man, it was even then the equal of any in the world.

The small R.C.A.F. which started out as the Canadian Air Force in 1920 and obtained the "royal" prefix in 1924, grew slowly but efficiently. And when Canada faced a national emergency last autumn, the small permanent force provided a perfect nucleus for the erection of a war-time air force.

Operating on a restricted budget and thus with comparatively aged equipment, the R.C.A.F. from the start chose its personnel carefully. Foremost in the building of the young force was its present head, Air Vice-Marshal G. M. Croil, who joined up February 18, 1920, the day on which the order-in-council creating the Canadian Air Force was signed.

#### Selective At Start

Air Vice-Marshal Croil took over actual command of the force, however, only on January 1, 1934. Necessarily small, the R.C.A.F. could well afford to be selective, with the result that the cream of the output of Canadian universities formed the skeleton of the war-time air force being built up to-day.

Commissioned officers in the air force were required to be graduates of the Royal Military college at Kingston, Ont., or engineering graduates of some recognized uni-

versity. Airmen and non-commissioned officers had to be graduates of technical schools or with similar scholastic attainments.

#### Fine Key Men

It has been from such material that the air force now draws its key men. Experience under actual service conditions in air stations across Canada has seasoned the permanent force personnel. In recent months they have had actual service types, the latest models of British military aircraft, to work with. More are on order.

Hard years of study, of actual experience in mapping, air photography, in flying under adverse

weather conditions, fitted the permanent personnel for the big job ahead. Side by side with them are the men of the "amateur air force," the auxiliary, non-permanent force whose squadrons have been training, after office hours, in various Canadian cities.

Tribute to the fine organization work of these veterans, the first Canadian squadron to be sent overseas will be a composite group of permanent and non-permanent men welded into a new unit under the name of No. 110 Army Co-operation Squadron from Toronto.

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