



Air Power and National Defence

By the **HONORABLE BROOKE CLAXTON**

Minister of National Defence

THE ROYAL Canadian Air Force today is in the midst of its greatest peace-time expansion programme, a programme which is turning it into a Force of 40 Squadrons, flying the latest types of jet aircraft, and equipped to turn out thousands of trained air and ground crew each year, including aircrew from other NATO nations desiring assistance of this sort.

This air force build-up is part of the general expansion programme of our armed forces. It is an expansion programme built around our belief—a belief shared by other nations which are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—that strong armed forces provide our best insurance against general war.

The air force build-up, like that of the Navy and Army, is being carried out to conform to the three main objectives of our national defence plan. These are:

- (a) The immediate defence of Canada and North America from direct attack;
- (b) implementation of any undertakings made by Canada under the Charter of the United Nations, or under the North Atlantic Treaty or other agreement for collective security;
- (c) the organization to build up our strength in the event of total war.

As regards our first objective, the RCAF

is placing its main emphasis on an aerial defence system, incorporating squadrons of fighters and an early warning web of radar stations. In this connection the RCAF is working closely with the United States, for in event of aerial attack it would be senseless to talk about boundary lines between our two nations.

Some fighter squadrons have already been equipped with Canadian-built F-86 Sabres, being produced by Canadair Ltd. of Montreal. These speedy day-fighters will be used to equip fighter squadrons based in Canada and will also be flown by our fighter squadrons going overseas to form part of the Integrated Force under General Eisenhower. Our Canadian-designed and built CF-100 Canuck, produced by A. V. Roe (Canada) at Malton, is scheduled to come into service shortly. It will be used initially at an operational training unit and as further aircraft come off the production line will be used to equip all-weather squadrons.

The RCAF's aerial defence system, incorporating the fighter squadrons and early warning and ground control chain, will progressively become operational as the aircraft and the complex equipment required for this system are produced. The aircraft and other equipment have only recently been developed. Canada, in this regard, is in the same position as other NATO nations. A decision today to up the strength of the armed (*Turn to p. 100*)

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forces cannot be followed overnight, or even in six months or a year, by acquisition of all the necessary weapons and equipment. They simply do not exist, and developing and producing them takes time. All possible measures have been taken and are being taken to speed this work along. Aircraft of the best and latest types will shortly be produced at the rate to provide the

front line aircraft for a squadron every month.

The second objective of Canada's national defence programme is linked with the aims of the United Nations and the agreements for collective security under the North Atlantic Treaty. In this regard the RCAF has been, and is, making large and valuable contributions.

Operationally, the RCAF has been engaged in the Korea airlift since July 27, 1950. On that day the first aircraft of 426 Transport Squadron were air-

borne from McChord Air Force Base, near Tacoma, in the State of Washington, heading for Japan. Since then the squadron has performed its duties on the airlift in a manner that has brought new laurels to the RCAF. During its first twelve months of operations on the airlift, 426 Squadron, flying twelve Canadian-built North Star transports, carried more than 6,600 personnel and almost 2,700,000 pounds of freight and mail. The squadron flew nearly 250 trips, covering 2,759,000 miles without loss of airmen or aircraft.

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Air Division: The RCAF plans to place an air division of eleven fighter squadrons, supported by a supply line of reserve aircraft, depots and training establishments, at the disposal of the Integrated Force. One fighter squadron has been undergoing operational training in the United Kingdom since January, 1951, and plans call for formation of an RCAF Fighter Wing in Britain late this year.

Valuable contributions are being made by the RCAF to collective security through its training aid to other NATO nations. Student pilots and navigators from Great Britain, Norway, France, The Netherlands, Belgium and Italy began training at RCAF flying schools late in 1950 and early in 1951, and our original offer concerning this type of aid has since been increased greatly. The RCAF is building up this training assistance to a point where approximately 1,400 student aircrew from other NATO nations will be trained here yearly.

The Reserve: Canada's third national defence objective calls for armed forces able to expand rapidly in the event of total war. In this regard the RCAF Auxiliary is of great importance, and emphasis has been placed on its buildup together with that of the Regular Force. Stress has been placed on establishment of auxiliary fighter and tactical squadrons and radar units. As rapidly as equipment and facilities can be provided these units are being brought up to war establishment. Although annual camp periods are being continued, increased emphasis is being placed on operational exercises with the Regular Force, in order that the minimum operational training would be required should it be necessary to place them on an active basis

in the event of a general war. Although the majority of key personnel are veterans of the last war, training programmes are in progress not only at the auxiliary units but at Regular Force schools to maintain a flow of "new" recruits. Approximately 1,000 high school students took full-time training at reserve flying and ground units during their summer holidays this year.

A quick stock-taking of the RCAF during its current expansion programme shows rapid headway, even though many types of weapons and equipment cannot be obtained overnight. To accommodate our own increased aircrew training requirements, and to be able to train the large numbers of student aircrew from other NATO nations that are coming here to earn their wings, new flying training schools have been, and are, being opened. Seven such schools have been formed, or are due for formation shortly, on the Prairies, and a school for specialized armament and operational training will be constructed in northern Alberta.

Out of Storage: A considerable number of wartime aircraft, mostly training

types but including some operational aircraft, has been taken out of storage and placed in service. One hundred piston-driven Mustang fighters have been purchased from the United States pending availability of our own Canadian-built jets. Acquisition of these aircraft allowed an additional fighter squadron of the Regular Force to form and commence tactical training. A similar number of twin-engine Mitchells has been bought from the United States, to be used for training purposes. In addition, 100 Texan trainers, similar to our Canadian-built Harvard, have been loaned to us by the U.S., until sufficient Harvards are built in Canada. A number of two-seater jet trainers, in short supply everywhere and vitally needed by all air forces of today, has been bought from the U.S. pending production of further aircraft of this type in Canada.

The RCAF expansion is part of the three-year build-up of the armed forces, which we estimate will cost more than five billion dollars. Appropriation for the RCAF this fiscal year comes to \$672,000,000. This is going to produce an air force of forty regular and reserve squadrons with more than 3,000

new, latest-type aircraft additional to those held at the beginning of the present fiscal year.

Good Progress: The last few months have seen good progress towards this goal. Women have again been recruited by the RCAF for many different trades, and first student aircrew from abroad have returned to their native lands wearing the wings they won in Canada, at RCAF training schools. New operational squadrons have been formed, some of them equipped with our own Canadian-built jets, and new flying fields, both training and operational, have been opened. A great amount of construction work is underway; for the air force expansion covers a wide range, running from extension of runways to construction of schools for children of married servicemen where normal school facilities are non-existent or unavailable. There are shortages, but we are overcoming them.

The RCAF is being built as a guardian of freedom and, should the need arise, our air force will do what is expected of it—and we expect a great deal.

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