

An important step was taken in August, 1940, by the formation of the Canada-United States Defence Board, on which the Army General Staff was represented. This Board was established to co-ordinate the military defensive measures of the two countries.

The Canadian Corps overseas was formed in December, 1940, consisting initially, of the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions and Corps Troops. An increase in the Canadian Corps to three divisions, with consequent strengthening of corps, army, and line of communication ancillary units, was approved. Authorization was given for the 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade group to be expanded into the 1st Canadian Armoured Division, and for the Canadian Corps, to include the 1st Canadian Army Tank Brigade.

Close co-operation was obtained with the automobile industry in the development of various types of highly specialized mechanical transport vehicles required in large numbers by modern armies. By the end of March 1940, 8,766 vehicles of all types had been delivered to the Canadian Army overseas, 6,998 to the Canadian Army at home, and 26,434 to other armies of the Empire. At that date, 11,845 vehicles were on order for the Canadian Forces and 49,775 for outside Governments. Canadian production of highly specialized army vehicles of various types had reached an average of 116 vehicles a day.

The Air Force.—Air training for aerial combat has taken a vital place in Canada's war effort. Building on air traditions established in the War of 1914-18, Canada in the present conflict has become the centre of air training for the British Commonwealth.

When the war broke out Canada's small air force responded at once to the need for coastal defence and escort duty along the shipping lanes; plans for rapid expansion to war strength were implemented and the R.C.A.F. prepared its own squadrons for overseas service.

The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.—Canada's main contribution to the war in the air has been the planning and organization of the central features of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan entrusted to the Dominion by agreement between the several parts of the Empire. This scheme to use Canada's open stretches for a great Commonwealth training plan was proposed within a very few weeks after the outbreak of War by the United Kingdom. Discussion of detail began in October of 1939, and by Dec. 17, Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King announced that the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada had agreed to such a plan and that the R.C.A.F. would be used as the nucleus of the organization that would provide, over the years, an inexhaustible supply of pilots, observers and air gunners.

The United Kingdom and participating Dominions agreed to have their recruits temporarily attached to the R.C.A.F. for the training period in Canada. The United Kingdom offered early assistance and sent 71 officers and 200 trained men to help in the organization.

The Plan is administered by Canada's Department of National Defence for Air assisted by a Supervisory Board at Ottawa composed of three Canadian Cabinet Ministers, representatives of the other participating Governments, the Deputy Minister of National Defence for Air and the Chief of the Air Staff.

In order to utilize the experience already possessed by the Canadian Department of Transport, it was agreed that that Department would take over the construction of aerodromes. This work was launched immediately. Under the terms of the agreement the United Kingdom was to supply the bulk of the training aircraft,