

# Air Cadet Movement Born In Winnipeg

## Aims To Build Character And To Teach Aeronautics To Young Canadians

By VINCE LEAH

WINNIPEG youth has its eyes on the skies. The lads of the city and its suburbs dream of a place in aviation . . . at the control wheel of a ponderous Lockheed that rides the night winds from coast to coast, or at the stick of a graceful, wheeling Spitfire . . . or perhaps at the lathe and workbench of the machine shop.

These youngsters are being groomed for a change in the world of aeronautics. Taking its place in the nation-wide chain of units of the newly-formed Air Cadets of Canada, No. 6 Winnipeg Squadron, with over 300 boys between 12 and 18 years of age. Winnipeg has pioneered in this serious business of introducing its young manhood to aviation.

In October, 1938, Canada's first air cadet corps was organized in this city. Albert E. Bennett, an air-minded citizen who knew the value of discipline and training received in juvenile organizations, began to ponder as he traveled back and forth to Christ church why youngsters hung around street lamps with nothing to do.

The more he thought about it the more he became convinced that something should be done to harness this gang spirit. His church authorities provided the space and the boys were willing to join a club. A dozen showed up at the first meeting and Mr. Bennett asked them about a name for their organization.

"G-men," they chorused. Mr. Bennett had a better idea. "What do you want to be when you grow up?" he asked them.

"Pilots," they chorused again.

"Then why not call ourselves Air Cadets?" The idea appealed to them and this first dozen kids from beneath the street lamp were organized the Christ Church Air Cadets by Mr. Bennett.

THE movement expanded rapidly. In 1939 one year later, the corps was forced to move through lack of room to Daniel McIntyre high school. It became the Winnipeg Air Cadets.

When the Air Cadets of Canada were organized this year by the Air Cadet League of Canada, under the guiding hand of the Royal Canadian Air Force the Winnipeg Air Cadets joined up, reorganized and, under the Department of National Defense, became No. 6 Squadron. Mr. Bennett is officer commanding with the rank of Air Cadet Squadron Leader. Robert Rutherford is secretary of the provincial committee and J. W. Smith of the Winnipeg squadron.

The air cadets aim, not merely to develop military aviators. Citizenship is its first aim and the movement has no thought of disbanding after the war is won. It hopes to play an important part in the future progress of civil aviation and in building the character of Canada's youth. Membership in the air cadets does not, of course, make a boy liable to compulsory service in the air force.

The Winnipeg squadron is offered by outstanding men. Air Cadet Squadron Leader Bennett formerly commanded the now defunct 10th Canadian Motor Machine Gun cadets and also organized a P.O.H. cadet group.

At the outbreak of the second World War he organized motorcyclists to train army officers in the art of piloting motorcycles. His hope of serving in the armed forces was balked when he was rejected as medically unfit.

AIR Cadet Flight-Lt. W. S. Press, who pioneered with Bennett in the Christ church corps, is second in command with charge of technical training, including airmanship, map reading, first aid, theory of flight, administration, air frames, aero engines, signals, mathematics, aircraft recognition,



Just three keen young Air Cadets of Canada getting on with the job of aeronautical study. Left to right — Robert Burkett, Don Edwards and Jim Anderson.



His host of friends will recognize Air Cadet Pilot Officer Alex Stewart, pointing out the merits of the Air-Speed Oxford engine to Cadet-Sgt. Bruce Pringle and Cadet Jack Armstrong.



Air Cadet James A. Scott, at right, is being shown how to operate a gasmask by two veterans of the last war: C.O.M.S. W. S. McCulloch, P.P.C.L.I., and Sgt. W. Q. Russell, S.S.R.

knots and splices and armament. He is assisted by Air Cadet Pilot Officer F. C. Babington, who served in the Royal Flying Corps in the first Great War and is now radio officer, and by Air Cadet Flying Officer James Barable, a graduate aeronautical engineer in charge of mechanics.

David A. Best, M.L.A., reeve of St. James, and a member of the local airport commission, is air cadet Pilot Officer commanding the St. James flight and Air Cadet Pilot Officer W. J. Fleming, who has spent over 30 years in boys' work, commands the central squadron.

Air Cadet Pilot Officer J. W. Leitch, who has a long and distinguished military career, commands the St. John's squadron and Air Cadet Pilot Officer Alex Stewart, who served in the medical corps during the last war, commands the Fort Rouge flight.

A strong provincial committee, supported by a local committee, will help the cadets along. Wing Commander D. R. McLaren is chairman of the provincial committee and Maj. R. C. Huggard, secretary-treasurer, Gilbert M. Eaton is vice-chairman.

The air force has appointed air cadet liaison officers throughout the country for the R.C.A.F. is interested in the movement. Flying Officer H. V. Bell is No. 2 Air Command's air cadet liaison officer.

YOUNGSTERS between 12 and 15 years of age may be recruited into a senior squadron up to one-third of its strength. A syllabus of carefully selected subjects, including junior first aid, signals, semaphore and wireless, model building, aircraft recognition and elementary aero engines has been drafted by Air Cadet Pilot Officer H. G. Young, who commands the junior squadron of the Winnipeg unit. Training is well underway.

The Winnipeg unit program is unique in that it investigates all cases of sickness within its ranks and reports on cadets' families requiring welfare services. Mrs. C. H. Chase, who has kept a motherly eye on the unit from the start, is social service representative.

The Winnipeg squadron hopes soon to have a building of its own for its organizers believing that air cadet training will grow far beyond what can be accomplished under present circumstances. Plans also are afoot for a band and a ladies' auxiliary.



He gets a thrill out of this, does Air Cadet Jack Keatts as he prepares to sit in the gun turret of a fighter-trainer.



Air Cadet Ken Fidler, right, wearing the new official air cadet uniform, stands by while Air Cadet Squadron Leader O. C. Bennet shows G. M. Eaton, national director of the Air Cadet League of Canada, and vice-chairman of the Manitoba committee, diagrams illustrating air cadet studies.