

Parliament

THE NEW AIR FORCE

MINISTER ON EXPANSION PROGRESS

TRAINING OF PERSONNEL

HOUSE OF LORDS

MONDAY, MARCH 15

THE LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat on the Woolsack at a quarter past 4 o'clock.

On the motion of VISCOUNT GAGE, Lord in Waiting, the Local Government (Financial Provisions) Bill, which has passed through the House of Commons, was read a second time.

After debate, in which VISCOUNT BLEDSIDE, LORD BARNBY, and EARL STANHOPE, First Commissioner of Works, took part, The Empire Settlement Bill was read the third time and passed.

Their lordships rose at eight minutes before 5 o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

MONDAY, MARCH 15

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at a quarter to 3 o'clock.

FEAR OF AERIAL WARFARE

MR. MATHERS (Lindtgham, Lab.) presented a petition which, he said, had been organized by the Federation of Progressive Societies and individuals drawing attention to the universal apprehension that existed with regard to the fear of aerial warfare.

He said that the petitioners prayed the House to reopen the debate on the subject of aerial warfare, which was suspended in 1933, and to prepare for the submission of arrangements for international ownership and control of civil aviation, thus having the way for complete air disarmament.

The Margate, Broadstairs, and District Electricity Bill and the Rickmansworth and Uxbridge Valley Water Bill were read a second time.

MURDER OF LIEUT. BEATTY

SIR A. KNOX (Weycombe, U.) asked the Under-Secretary of State for India if he could give details of the murder of Lieutenant Beatty, acting Assistant Political Officer in Mysore, on February 7, and whether this officer was carrying a large sum of money when he was murdered, and whether the murderer was provided with an adequate escort.

MR. BUTLER (Saffron Walden, U.) replied: I am circulating a report which my noble friend (the Secretary of State) received by telegram from the Government of India giving full details of the murder. Lieutenant Beatty was provided with an escort consisting of three armed orderlies in his own car and another two armed orderlies in a lorry immediately behind. The number of the men believed to be guilty of the murder surrendered to the British authorities on March 13.

SIR A. KNOX: Is it not a fact that another young officer was murdered at Waziristan on the preceding day, and who is responsible for allowing this young officer to go in a small closed saloon with an inadequate escort and carrying over £300?

MR. BUTLER: If my hon. friend will wait the report which I am circulating he will see the circumstances in which this regrettable affair occurred.

distance? How can these young officers protect themselves? There ought to have been an armoured car in front.

MR. BUTLER repeated that the report would explain the circumstances.

[The following is the circulated report:—] Lieutenant Beatty was proceeding on February 7 on the road between Miranshah and Datta Kheil for the purpose of paying khassadars. He was travelling in his own car, which contained the khassadar clerk and three armed orderlies, and was closely followed by the khassadar lorry containing two more armed orderlies. At a point where the road takes a sharp bend the car was ambushed by a gang of men, believed to be about 10 in number, lying up on both sides of the road. These opened fire from point-blank range from in front of the car as it was passing. The car was hit in the engine, and the three men in the lorry were killed. The car was then driven off into the country north of the road. At the sound of the firing the lorry drew up round the corner, and the two orderlies in it ran up a small hill, and engaged the gang, who were making off northwards, wounding at least one man. The then ran back for assistance of Lieutenant Beatty. The khassadars who were on pay parade at Baysa near by, having heard the firing, also went in pursuit of the gang, while the Naib Tahsilat took Lieutenant Beatty into Miranshah.]

THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN FACT

MR. HENDERSON (Kingswinford, Lab.) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he had received the report on the recent agreement made between the Czechoslovakian Government and representatives of the German minority; and, if so, whether he would make a statement.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE, Under-Secretary, Foreign Office (Dorset, S.), U.—Yes, sir. The agreement which has been reached with the smaller parties in the German minority provides for a measure of alleviation in the German-speaking districts, particularly in the economic field. His Majesty's Government naturally welcome any action likely to promote the internal well-being of a friendly State.

MR. HENDERSON: Might not the Under-Secretary welcome this agreement as a useful contribution towards the peace of Europe, having regard to the possible friction that might have taken place between Germany and Czechoslovakia on this question?

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: I indicated assent.

A WESTERN FACT

MR. DAY (Southwark Central, Lab.) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he had received any information and could make a statement as to the decision arrived at between Germany and her Western neighbours for the purpose of concluding a treaty for a new system of security in Western Europe.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: Replies have now been sent by all the four Powers to whom His Majesty's Government's memorandum of November 19 was communicated, and these replies are at present under consideration.

THE MAR CANTABRICO

MR. DENVILLE (Newcastle, Central, U.) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any protest would be made to the Spanish Government with regard to the recent attempt to smuggle arms into the country from the United States of America by the renaming of the Spanish vessel Mar Cantabrico as Lord Ade of Newcastle, and by the use of the British flag on that ship.

Similar questions were asked by BRIGADIER-GENERAL CLIFTON BROWN (Newbury, U.) and by CAPTAIN BALFOUR (Isle of Thanet, U.).

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE:—Distress signals from a vessel using a call sign of the British ss. Adela were picked up by His Majesty's ships in North Spanish waters on March 8. Destroyers were sent immediately to her assistance, but before their arrival it was learnt that the ship in question was foreign, and is understood to have been the Spanish ss. Mar Cantabrico. His Majesty's ships therefore returned to harbour. The employment of ruses, such as the use of a neutral flag by a merchant ship, in order to escape capture by an enemy is a right which is well-established under international law, and this case would not, therefore, justify representations such as those suggested.

SALE OF SHIPS TO SPAIN

Non-Intervention Committee, any provisions existed to prevent the rebels or the Spanish Government buying ships with which to import cargoes of arms or volunteers and thereby defeating the object of the scheme.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE:—The sale of ships to the contending parties in Spain is not prohibited by the Non-Intervention Agreement, but I can assure the hon. member that the point which he raises will not be lost sight of.

RECALL OF VOLUNTEERS

LIEUT.-COM. FLETCHER (Nuneaton, Lab.) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs when the possibility of recalling foreign troops and volunteers from Spain was last considered by the Non-Intervention Committee; if any progress had been made; if he was still prepared to state that no foreign troops or volunteers had been landed in Spain since the ban on them was signed on February 20; and as it was inconsistent with the ban that foreign troops, estimated in the case of Italy to number 100,000, should still be participating in the fighting, if he would use his utmost endeavours to bring such a state of affairs to an end.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE:—As regards the first and second parts of the question, I understand that the Chairman's Sub-Committee of the Non-Intervention Committee has had the matter under consideration and, as the hon. member will see from the resolution passed by the Committee at its meeting on March 8, it was agreed to consider the matter further as soon as possible. I understand that this further consideration is being actively pursued. As regards the third part of the question, the hon. member will appreciate that the agreement which came into force at midnight on February 20, 1937, relates to the departure of volunteers from their respective countries. As my right hon. friend has already informed the House, His Majesty's Government have no information that nationals of any country have left for Spain since that date in contravention of the agreement.

LIEUT.-COM. FLETCHER:—Is it not now clear that the Italian Government did not sign that ban on volunteers until the Italians had landed all the volunteers and munitions in Spain which they wished to land or intended to land, and that her signature was insincere and the ban itself a farce?

MR. MANDER:—I am sorry that I cannot say so. I am sure that the Italian Government did not sign that ban on volunteers until the Italians had landed all the volunteers and munitions in Spain which they wished to land or intended to land, and that her signature was insincere and the ban itself a farce.

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upon Tyneside Local Government would be available for members of the Reserve.

MR. BALDWIN (Leeds, U.)—I hope that the report will be available to me next Thursday.

AIR MINISTRY AND THE COMMONS

LIEUT.-COM. FLETCHER asked the Prime Minister if, in view of the large expenditure to be incurred on the Royal Air Force and the importance of the complexity of air questions, the hon. member would make arrangements whereby the Air Ministry, whose estimates were now the second largest of the Defence Ministries, might be a member of this House.

MR. BALDWIN:—I could refer the hon. and gallant member to the answer which I gave on March 19 last in reply to a question by the hon. member (Mr. Tinker).

LIEUT.-COM. FLETCHER:—In view of the enormous amount involved in our air defence, is it not true that the House should have an opportunity of questioning the Minister himself? Is it not due to the status of the Air Ministry that it should be represented in this House by the Minister?

MR. BALDWIN:—There is another side. In view of the enormous amount of work that rests on the Secretary of State for Air, there are advantages in his being free to devote himself to the work he has to do and not to be sent by a Parliamentary Committee here. The strain at present of that particular office is enormous. I think it conduces to the best interests of the administration that the representation at present should exist as it is.

MR. MANDER:—Is it proposed that the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War should be sent to the House of Lords? (Laughter.)

MR. BALDWIN:—Neither of those posts at the present time demands the same strain that is attached to what is practically the creation of a new Air Force.

SUGAR SUBSIDY TOTAL OVER £39,000,000 PAID

MR. W. S. MORRISON, Minister of Agriculture (Cirencester and Tewkesbury, U.), informed Mr. J. G. Gurney (Lancely, Lab.) that the total amount of Exchequer subsidy that had been paid to the beet sugar industry in Great Britain under the provisions of the British Sugar (Subsidy) Act, 1925, and subsequent legislation was £39,776,173.

He said that the total amount of the annual subsidy between 1924 and 1936, and in the current year was estimated to be £2,576,000. The number of workers permanently employed in the factories was about 2,250. During the current year, about 7,200 additional workers were employed. It was estimated that the amount of agricultural labour required for the 1936 crop represented about 2,000 man-years.

TERRITORIAL ARMY STRENGTH

SIR V. WARRENDELL, Financial Secretary, War Office (Grantham, U.), replying to Sir G. MITCHESON (St. Pancras, W.), U., said that the strength of Territorial Army units within the London District increased during February, 1937, by nine officers and 275 other ranks. During that month the strength of the Territorial units of the 1st Airborne Division increased by four officers and 271 other ranks.

AIR ESTIMATES

SIR P. SASSOON, Under-Secretary of State for Air (Hythe, U.), said:—

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair of the Air Estimates.

He said:—It is my duty this afternoon to introduce the largest Air Estimates which have ever been presented to this House. The net estimate of £82,500,000, including loan provision, was made with an average hour of £18,000,000 asked for by the Ministry in pre-expansion years. It shows an increase of nearly £32,000,000 on the total of the Estimates of 1936.

The magnitude of this figure gives rise to mingled feelings of disappointment and relief.

Many appointments have been found for these officers, not only as pilots in regular companies and as flying instructors at civil flying schools, but with a variety of other firms not connected with aviation. The Air Force Officers' Employment Association has found employment for over 90 per cent. of its members in the books. (Cheers.) That is not only encouraging, but a very great achievement. (Cheers.)

SHORT SERVICE SCHEME

FINANCIAL HELP

Another scheme which will be of great assistance to short service pilots in securing employment when they leave the Service is that recommended by the Maybury Committee and approved in principle by the Government. Financial help is to be given to a suitable flying school to enable advanced training to be offered at low rates, and preference will be given to ex-short service commission pilots. This will facilitate the securing of the special certificates required to-day by a pilot before he can take his place in a civil air transport company. Practical steps are also being taken to improve the prospects of employment for airmen on discharge.

I want to say a few words about Dominion cooperation. There is already in operation a scheme whereby pilots are trained as cadets in the Royal Australian Air Force and then come over and serve a term of years in the British Air Force in this country. They afterwards return to the Royal Australian Air Force Reserve. A similar scheme exists in New Zealand, and there is also a scheme there whereby candidates for the British Air Force can be medically examined before they come over here so as to ensure that they are not turned down when they arrive in this country and have all their journey wasted.

We should welcome the adoption of a similar system by Canada, from which Dominion no fewer than 100 young men have come over on their own and have been accepted for short service commissions. (Cheers.) We welcome these pilots. They are first-rate young men and we would like to do everything we can to facilitate their entry. The increase in first-line strength has of course made it necessary to build up a proportionate reserve. That is most important. The increased demand for regular pilots has in some cases led us to retain in active service officers who in the ordinary course would have passed automatically to the Royal Air Force Reserve. To that extent the rate of expansion in this reserve has diminished. It is at that time when it should be increasing to keep pace with the increase in first-line strength.

THE NEW RESERVE

To meet this difficulty the Air Ministry introduced a scheme last year whereby a boy who is leaving school could serve continuously for one year with the Air Force. During that period he would have the rank of a pilot officer and receive pay accordingly. At the end of the year he would revert to the reserve without any further loss of liabilities except the certain number of hours' flying every year, for which he will receive £25 a year.

At the same time a new reserve is being created, called the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. This is a direct entry reserve. Pilots are recruited straight from civil life, and we hope during the course of next financial year to recruit over 800 men. We realize that it is necessary to bring them up to the men with that object a network of training schools which is being set up in the neighbourhood of London and other great towns in England.

Town centres also are being formed for instruction in ground subjects, and to serve as a base for the aerodrome centres on or about April 1, and applications from candidates living in London and in the neighbourhood of the centres outside London can now be received.

Employers can be of real assistance to the success of the scheme by giving encouragement and facilities to their employees. Big concerns will be afforded the opportunity to form bodies of recruits sponsored by the firm and training together at the same flying centre. Already the Bank of England and the Midland Bank

shown. I need hardly remind hon. members of the vital importance of this Reserve. I feel sure that they will assist recruiting to the utmost, by giving it publicity in their constituencies and in any way they can.

The Aerodrome Board has had an extremely difficult task in finding sites to satisfy all its conditions. During recent months, unfortunately, building labour has become more and more difficult to obtain. This is already causing us some embarrassment. Unless a satisfactory solution can be found, it must entail delays in our building programme. Unfavourable weather has also added to our difficulties.

AIRCRAFT DESIGN

The second of our expansion problems is that of the production of adequate supplies of equipment. This covers a wide field, for it embraces not only aircraft and engines but all the ancillary equipment such as instruments, armament, and wireless. No one will question the excellence of the British designs, whether of aircraft or engines. The fact that so many foreign countries have asked for permission to purchase our latest types, or to manufacture them under licence, is sufficient evidence of their quality. (Hear, hear.) Except for the large aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm, the monoplane, which approaches most nearly to the ideal streamline form, has almost entirely replaced the biplane. Difficulties of providing wings, of adequate stiffness to resist twisting and bending delayed this change for many years. They have now been overcome by various methods of stressed skin construction. By continuous attention to details such as surface smoothness, the drag of our latest aircraft has been greatly reduced.

The new result is that the striking power of our new types far surpasses that of corresponding types of two years ago. Let me emphasize, however, that we are far from resting content with the design of our new machines. Active research and development are continually progressing with a view to obtaining machines of even greater speed, range, and load capacity.

PROGRESS IN RESEARCH

While I am dealing with our progress on these lines, I may, perhaps, refer shortly to advances we have made in certain other directions. In particular, two new guns have been introduced for use on aircraft. One is a completely new type of Vickers gun. The other is the Browning gun, which has the merit of simplicity and gives a greatly improved performance for aerial use. Arrangements have been made for its manufacture in this country. Active research continues to exploit still further the advantages of higher quality fuel. Tests of the sleeve valve aero engine, which gives substantial reduction in maintenance as well as more rapid production and a better performance, have been most encouraging, and it is about to go for service trials.

Finally, over the whole field of aircraft components, accessory equipment, wireless apparatus, and warlike stores generally, great emphasis is being placed on standardization of types and simplicity of design, with the object of facilitating peace-time production. Having given our contractors the closest indication of what we require in the way of performance and quality, we encourage them to produce in the simplest way. For example, our requirements in wireless equipment are 14 times what they were in the pre-expansion era, yet we now have a standard type which meets our needs and which is easy to produce in quantity.

PRODUCTION DELAYS OVERCOME

INCREASE IN DELIVERIES

As regards delivery of aircraft, we have stated that there have been delays, and naturally we have been disappointed. Let me remind the House that deliveries for our programme have been based on the forecasts of manufacturers. These forecasts were necessarily framed on inadequate experience of production difficulties with the most modern types of aircraft and have inevitably proved in many cases optimistic, so that firms have not been able to keep up to schedule.

The Air Ministry has done everything pos-

to be made to works. To encourage firms to put the work in hand at the earliest possible moment we have covered them by the capital clause in contracts. Certain firms have, with the approval of the Air Ministry, entered into agreements with firms outside the industry for the production of aircraft. We have encouraged, and indeed in many cases insisted on, a considerable amount of work being put out by sub-contract. We have each firm on a single type as far as possible. Finally there are the shadow factories.

The delays have been due to various causes. There have been a shortage of skilled labour and a distinct shortage of skilled draughtsmen. Again, firms had little post-war experience of large-scale production. They had to extend their shops, rearrange their layout, reorganize their whole system. All this had to take place concurrently with the maximum production from their existing plant.

ORDERS FOR NEW TYPES

Thirdly, the large increase in demand coincided with a most remarkable advance in aeronautical design and technique. The Air Ministry took the risk—a deliberate risk—of placing production orders for new types before their prototypes had been built and tested. Under this latter policy it was inevitable that some of the teething troubles usually associated with the prototype would manifest themselves in the first production machines. The necessity for simultaneous development of quite new quantity production methods has also tended to cause delay. These difficulties are, however, steadily being overcome.

Nevertheless, the new method is proving incomparably quicker than the old. We have in fact halved the time taken in bringing a new machine into production. Deliveries of the new types are now beginning and the rate of output is being increased progressively. The risk we have taken has proved to be thoroughly justified and a thousand times worth while.

As I have said, the Air Ministry are doing their utmost to expedite production. We are aiming at reducing the number of types. Modifications are being confined to the smallest number possible, consistent with safety and performance. We are giving firms every assistance in securing materials and machine tools. Our production staff, consisting of people with great manufacturing experience, are in almost daily contact with firms, investigating causes of delay, and giving helpful advice on production matters. Indeed, the firms themselves have testified to the help which we have given them. Finally, there is always the incentive to the firms to give quicker and cheaper production.

Hon. members may say: "We approve your policy of ordering new types of aircraft. We appreciate that certain delays may have been unavoidable. We admit that, when your shadow factories are in full swing and peak production is reached, deliveries will meet requirements, as far as they can at present be met. But you cannot give deliveries over the coming months?" Is there anything further that can be done which would accelerate production? That is a very natural and proper question, and I wish to deal with it. A certain priority in delivery of machine tools has been obtained voluntarily. As yet, there has been no serious shortage of materials; but I am sure priority could be arranged in the same way if a shortage developed.

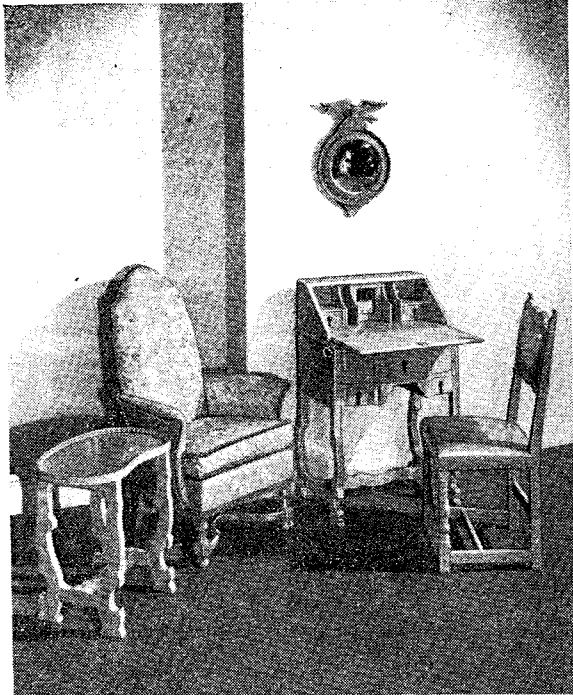
SCARCITY OF SKILLED MEN

It has been suggested that we might develop a system by which further firms could be turned over to aircraft production. I would, however, stress that there is a vast amount of sub-contract work being carried on by firms who are doing the particular kind of work they are qualified to do and are doing it in the ordinary course of business. Both the Air Ministry and the main aircraft contractors are doing their best to secure a widening of production in this way. To turn over a number of these firms to complete aircraft production

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SES AT TRE' PORTS

S. CAYZER (Ches. J.) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, as the result of the counter-proposals submitted to the Japanese Government by his Majesty's Ambassador in Tokyo, a settlement satisfactory to the British leaseholders' committee had now been arrived at concerning the cancellation of the perpetual leases in the treaty ports now held by British subjects.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE.—Yes, sir. An agreement has now been reached on the basis of proposals put forward by his Majesty's Ambassador with the assent of the leaseholders' committee. I am expecting to hear very shortly that negotiations have been exchanged between his Majesty's Ambassador and the Japanese Government giving effect to the agreement.

"THE TIMES" AND GERMANY

COMMANDER O. LOCKER-LAMPSON asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention had been drawn to the refusal of the German Government to permit the sale of *The Times* of Tuesday last: whether there were any German publications which his Majesty's Government would not allow on sale in England; and what steps his Majesty's Government would take to prevent a recurrence of these conditions.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE.—I have no information on this subject beyond what has appeared in the Press. The answer to the second part of the question is "No, sir."

COMMANDER LOCKER-LAMPSON asked whether there was any chance of compensation for those who lost money in these circumstances.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE.—That is a different point. Perhaps the hon. member will put it down.

MR. ATTLEE.—Is there not something very defective in the intelligence service of the Government? They seem to know nothing about anything. (Opposition cheers.)

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE.—Matters are reported to this country when the Ambassador thinks it proper to do so, but it is very doubtful in this case whether any action could be taken in a matter which is primarily an internal affair.

MR. GALLACHER (Fife, W., Comm.) asked whether the Foreign Secretary was aware that every German boat which came in here brought masses of printed leaflets, and whether he would not ban this.

TRADE WITH POLAND

SIR J. MELLOR (Tamworth, U.) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if, in view of the balance of trade between the United Kingdom and Poland being substantially in favour of Poland, he would make representations to the Polish Government in the interest of British bondholders against the Polish Government's declared intention of discontinuing full provision for the service of the Republic of Poland Seven per Cent. Stabilization Loan, sterling issue.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE.—Representations on this question have already been made by his Majesty's Government to the Polish Government, who have given to the Council of Foreign Bondholders an assurance that a Polish delegation will come to London next month to give such additional information as may be desired. His Majesty's Government will continue to keep in touch with the Council of Foreign Bondholders on the matter.

SMUGGLING IN NORTH CHINA

In reply to **MR. MOREING** (Preston, U.), **VISCOUNT CRANBORNE** said:—According to the latest figures which I have received there has been a sensible diminution in the value and volume of goods smuggled into North China.

TYNESIDE REPORT THIS WEEK

MR. D. ADAMS (Consett, Lab.) asked the Prime Minister whether he could now state when the Report of the Royal Commission

taken to safeguard our own country against attack and to fulfil our international obligations. (Hear, hear.) In previous years I have been careful to point out that our expansion in no way meant that we had abandoned our hope of securing an air pact and a general stabilization of air armaments. Neither have we abandoned that hope to-day. On the contrary, we regard its realization as a matter of paramount importance. We shall seize instantly every opportunity to achieve it. Until such opportunity offers, however, we have no choice but to proceed with our plans.

A British Air Force strong, ready, and well equipped, is one of the greatest contributions which this country can make to the peace of the world. (Cheers.) Two fundamental considerations have always been present in our minds. Is our programme adequate, and is it being effectively carried out? As regards adequacy, the Government has many sources of information open to it. Many of these are sources which, in the nature of things, cannot be available to private individuals. The information from all these sources is correlated, and it is upon this information that the programme must be based. (Cheers.) All the information that reaches the Government is constantly under the review of the Committee of Imperial Defence and the Government, and the programme is based on that knowledge.

THREE MAIN PROBLEMS

With regard to the second consideration, in any defence programme there are three main problems which have to be dealt with—men, material, and the war potential. The Air Force expansion is not merely a question of making good deficiencies. It means practically the trebling of a force as well as rearming it with modern equipment. The importance of personnel in our expansion cannot be over-emphasized.

An ample supply and reserve of trained personnel are not only important, but absolutely essential. Aircraft and aero engines can be produced with increasing speed as experience of production is gained and as new plant comes into operation. It is a mechanical problem and a problem of production. Not so with personnel. Training cannot be improvised. A considerable period is absolutely necessary to train really skilled pilots, navigators, and so forth.

The question of personnel is wholly an Air Ministry responsibility. We are responsible for the recruiting and for the training. I am the more glad to be able to inform the House that this aspect of the expansion programme is entirely satisfactory. (Cheers.)

Our programme for last year envisaged the entry of some 1,200 short-service officers and 235 airmen for training as pilots. Those figures have not only been reached, they have been surpassed, and we have begun to recruit in anticipation of our future requirements. During the coming financial year we hope to train 1,175 pilots. The position with regard to airmen is equally satisfactory. During 1936 we planned to recruit over 11,000 airmen, including 2,656 apprentices and boy entrants. With the continuance of public support we hope to recruit a slightly larger number during the coming year.

NO RELAXATION OF EFFORT

I think I have said enough to show that, great as have been the demands, they have been completely and fully met. The fact pays handsome tribute to the sense of patriotism and spirit of adventure of the younger generation. (Cheers.) We must continue to rely on the support of the British public, and we feel confident that we shall get it. I can give a definite assurance that the education and character of those accepted are first rate. We derive as much satisfaction from quality as we do from the numbers of those young men who are coming forward in the interests of their country.

So far as the permanent officer is concerned there is keen competition for the increased entry into the Cadet College at Cranwell, and also for the university entrants, who are so valuable to us. Close contact is also maintained with many of the public schools. Officers serving in the Royal Air Force are appointed to their old schools to keep a close liaison with the Air Ministry. Flying demonstrations, visits to Air Force stations, and lectures on Air Force subjects are among the activities covered by the scheme. This policy has more than justified itself.

Meanwhile the Air Ministry is doing all it possibly can to secure employment for short-service officers when they retire from active



The Spring Bride

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Veil and headress, 5½ gns.

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Parliament

Continued from page 9

not come into production until long after the peak production of the parent firms and the shadow factories had been reached.

What would help us to secure accelerated production would be more skilled personnel. There are unfortunately not enough skilled men to go round. To draft picked men from other engineering industries into aircraft firms would, however, involve an immense dislocation of our general engineering industry just when it is passing through a period of great activity.

It is of the utmost importance that this activity should continue. To undermine and interrupt it, with the immediate reaction which would follow in other industries, would be fatal. Many unskilled workers whose occupations are dependent on those of skilled workers would be thrown out of employment. The financing of the rearmament programme itself, dependent as it is on general economic prosperity, would also be adversely affected.

So far as the war potential is concerned, the policy regarding the shadow factories has already been explained at length and I need hardly dwell on it now. It is a practical policy which not only creates a war potential, but also reinforces production and does not interfere with normal industry. I should add that satisfactory progress is being made with the erection of factories both for the production of air frames and engines.

Finally, a careful review is being made of requirements of those raw materials of which there would be a risk of shortage in time of war. Arrangements have already been made for the purchase of reserves of certain essential products. Provision is being made for obtaining adequate reserves of petrol and oil for storing them in places least accessible to air attack.

FUTURE OF CONTRACTS

MANUFACTURERS' SAFEGUARDS

I want to turn for a few minutes to the question of contracts. The Air Ministry has had three objects constantly in view. First, to get the machines we want; second, to obtain them as quickly as possible; and third, to get them at a fair price.

Many steps have been taken to achieve these ends. To obtain deliveries we have persuaded manufacturers to make large extensions of factories and plant. In doing this they were naturally anxious as to whether they might be left with redundant buildings and plant when expansion was completed. We want to avoid the experience of the last War, when firms who had energetically expanded buildings and plant were left with these on their hands.

We therefore considered it right and proper to safeguard the manufacturers against similar risks by introducing a capital clause into contracts. In effect, it provides that, if on completion of expansion it is found that contractors are burdened with buildings and plant erected to carry out our contracts for which they can no longer find employment, they will be able to claim compensation.

Before compensation is awarded, however, the contractors' books will be fully and carefully inspected. If it is then found that, in spite of all precautions, excessive profits have been made in an isolated case, the excess profit will be taken into account in assessing the amount of compensation. This arrangement gives the contractor the security he needs and also ensures that the taxpayer does not pay more than he should.

COSTS AND PRICES

I should now like to deal with the question of costs and prices. In the first place, we have the fullest right of inspection of the books of contractors. Our own accounting and technical costings departments have been immensely strengthened since the House knows.

We further have the assistance of Mr. Reeve, managing director of the Associated Equipment Company, with his wide experience of costs in relation to engineering production.

In many cases we are dealing with new types. Even the contractor does not know what his costs will be. We give therefore our "instructions to proceed" and then wait for a first

in principle by his Majesty's Government. Perhaps it will be useful if I mention briefly the main points of policy.

The first point is that routes must be fully organized with wireless and other equipment, so that services may be regular and punctual by day and night to limit as far as possible, the risk of air collisions. Accordingly, it is proposed to set up a general system of radio and control facilities, operated by the Air Ministry. Provision for a first instalment of the cost has been included in the present Estimates.

The experience of internal air services during the past year has also raised in an acute form the question how such services can best be operated on an economic basis. The Committee agreed that, if they are going to pay, there must be some limit to competition. Actual traffic must be concentrated, so as to permit of a greater number of flying hours for each machine maintained in operation. The practical scheme outlined by the Committee for testing this conclusion is to be followed up, in order that further experience may be gained. I take this opportunity to express the thanks of his Majesty's Government to Sir Henry Maybury, and to his board, for the very valuable report they have presented.

EMPIRE MAILS

SCHEME TO BEGIN NEXT YEAR

Turning now to developments in British external air communications, satisfactory progress is being made towards the fulfilment of the Empire Air Mail Scheme. After long negotiations last summer, Australia have agreed to come into the scheme under arrangements enabling certain special adjustments to be made to meet Australian requirements. It is expected that the scheme will come into operation at the beginning of 1938. From that time all first-class mail from the United Kingdom to Empire countries on the Empire Air Mail routes will be carried for a flat rate of 14d per 100z, that being the current preferential Empire postage rate. Meanwhile, it is hoped that a start will be made on the Durban service in the early summer and on the Singapore route towards the end of the year.

The complete scheme aims at providing flying-boat services on the routes to South Africa, India, and Australia, assisted by certain landplane services to India, all operated by the new Empire aircraft. The flying-boat services will be—three services a week to Kismu, of which two will go on to Durban; and three services a week to Singapore, of which two will go on to Sydney. The landplane services will probably be—three services a week to Egypt, of which two will go to India, thus giving, with the three flying-boat services, five services a week to India. There will be arrangements made for feeder services in connexion with all routes.

Hon. members will have learned with satisfaction that the Portsmouth City Council have agreed to cooperate in this Empire Air Mail Scheme by its adoption of a proposal for a flying-boat base at Langstone Harbour.

NORTH ATLANTIC ROUTE

The main details of the arrangements agreed upon between the Governments affected, concerning the proposed North Atlantic Service, were explained to the House last July. The very formidable task of providing the necessary ground organization and equipment is being actively pursued and bases for both land and marine aircraft are being selected by the Governments affected.

As regards aircraft, three main lines of transatlantic development are in hand. Four-engined high-speed land machines are on the point of completion, and it is hoped to operate an experimental service with them before the end of this year. A fleet of specially designed flying-boats should be available in the course of 1938, while the possibilities of catapulting long-range flying-boats are being actively investigated.

The Mayo Composite aircraft and refuelling in the air constitute two subsidiary lines of research, directed to finding the best solution of long-range problems. Each of the lines indicated has its own particular advantages and disadvantages. All will be actively pursued to determine their possibilities. Meanwhile, long-range training flights have begun with two flying-boats of the "Empire" type.

encouraged us with an ample flow of recruits. We ask that this flow may continue.

So large an expansion in so short a time has never been approached, even remotely. It is an expansion without precedent in time of peace in the history of our country. It is being accomplished by voluntary effort, not by emergency powers. It is based on good will and cooperation, not upon dictatorial decrees.

We have still an enormous task before us during the next two years. I venture to say that we have made a good start of an expansion scheme of which even yet we cannot clearly see the end. I am confident that, if the help and encouragement we have received during the past two years is continued, we shall surmount successfully whatever further problems we may be called upon to meet. (Cheers.)

MANDATES AND MEN

THE LABOUR ATTITUDE

Mr. MONTAGUE (Ilkington, W., Lab.) said that the Opposition would be justified in voting against every penny of the Estimates to show their disagreement with Government policy. To represent such a vote as one to deprive the nation of necessary armed protection was a new and somewhat ingenious doctrine, for Ministers had often voted against Service Estimates lock, stock, and barrel.

Offensive weapons preponderated in the Government's programme, and the competition of bomber against bomber, and more against Britain because of Britain's peculiar vulnerability. Did the Government imagine that Germany had in mind the colonization of Britain? On the answer to that question depended a great deal, not only in reference to the kind of machines provided, but also to their disposition. If that were not the idea it was probable that fear of a sudden attack on this country without warning was more or less a fantasy.

If Germany or any other country wanted war she would find an excuse, but if Germany wanted the return of her colonies she would adopt appropriate tactics, penetration on the spot. The question was one of mandates and their denudation. The mandates came from the League, and members who talked about isolation must logically be prepared to surrender them unless isolation meant "what we have heard."

Did the Government believe that the manhood of this country would throw themselves into a war of unnameable horror for the continued possession of mandates in Africa? If they did they must be mad. Our people would fight for honor and for honor, but they would not fight for mandates. Germany had a case which was certainly strong in justice, and the danger of the situation of this country was in the fact that bases threatening our coastal routes, the Cape to Cairo communications, and our other interests in Africa could be established in Tanganyika and South-West Africa.

ATTACK IN AFRICA

If it were true that the people of this country were not likely to be willing to support a war in order to retain mandates for this country or for the Union of South Africa, it was reasonable to assume that Germany was likely to strike not in this country, but in Africa, and present us with a *fait accompli*. Then the question would be whether we would fight for these mandates.

Mr. SANDYS (Norwich, U.)—Is the hon. member suggesting that Germany is likely to invade, ie an invasion of Africa by air without affecting this country?

Mr. MONTAGUE said that his suggestion was that if there were any danger of attack at the beginning of a war it would not be before the end of this year. A fleet of specially designed flying-boats should be available in the course of 1938, while the possibilities of catapulting long-range flying-boats are being actively investigated.

The Mayo Composite aircraft and refuelling in the air constitute two subsidiary lines of research, directed to finding the best solution of long-range problems. Each of the lines indicated has its own particular advantages and disadvantages. All will be actively pursued to determine their possibilities. Meanwhile, long-range training flights have begun with two flying-boats of the "Empire" type.

put in the hands of the aircraft manufacturers instead of in the hands of the motor-car industry.

He and other hon. members had striven for years for a Minister of Defence. There was now a Minister for Coordination. It was not quite what they had dreamt about, not quite their child, a little sterile imagination, a little constituted in a son (laughter), but still getting on towards what one day would be required. The question was: Was Government policy to be framed on the results of the Minister's inquiry, or was it to be framed by a Cabinet Committee as it was previously?

Mr. ELLIS SMITH (Stoke, Lab.) asked if the Minister was satisfied that the available skilled labour was being utilized to the best advantage, and whether he would undertake that in future the fair wages clause should be interpreted in aircraft factories in the same way as it was in other factories. The men employed in aircraft factories and other engineering establishments strongly resented the continued accusations about sabotage, for which there was no foundation.

WING COMMANDER JAMES (Wellingborough, U.) hoped that the Government would not give in to the demand for a rapid acceleration of the expansion programme. The programme could not be carried out faster without loss of efficiency. Enough allowance was not made for the advantage we had in starting the expansion programme with a small but extraordinarily efficient Air Force, and we had advantages in the quality of the personnel, material, and the skill of the ground staff over other countries in Europe. We also had certain geographical advantages.

When was the Government to say the last word on the question of the Fleet Air Arm? What was needed was the institution by the Government of an authority that should override Admiralty and Air Ministry alike. For one Department to assume a position of privilege, as the Admiralty had done for years, and to refuse to accept Government decisions was demoralizing to both Services.

DEFENCE AND ATTACK

THE STRATEGIC POSITION

Mr. LEES-SMITH (Keighley, Lab.) asked whether it was true that in air warfare defence could not effectively function against attack. If that was true it must fundamentally alter the strategic position of this country and place us in extreme peril. If it was not true, and defence could be made effective against attack, we were back in our old position of an island Power.

For a considerable time some of the best scientific brains in the country had been working on measures of defence, and they had complained that the Air Ministry had not been very receptive of their ideas. Professor Lindemann had said that the Ministry had only adapted itself to these devices under pressure, and still regarded them as side-shows which would keep the scientists quiet. He had pointed out that there were a great number of other devices on the horizon, which he believed would be more effective than the billion barrage, and it would be very serious if the Ministry's attitude towards these new devices was the same as it had hitherto been towards the balloon barrage. The work of investigating methods of technical defence ought not to be divided up, as at present, between the Air Ministry and the War Office.

Mr. WELLS (Bedford, U.) urged that steps should be taken to assist in the construction of airships for commercial purposes in this country.

CALL FOR AIR WARFARE ABOLITION

WORLD CONTROL OF CIVIL ARM

Mr. MATHERS called attention to the need for the abolition of aerial warfare and the international control of civil aviation; and moved:—

That, in view of the peril to civilization latent in air warfare, this House calls for immediate and sustained effort to secure the abolition of military and naval air forces and the international control of civil aviation.

He said that our Statesmen had lost oppor-

experience in the War was not much guide to what might happen 20 years afterwards, after enormous developments in methods of attack and defence. No Government spokesman had ever said that our only defence was by way of air attack against an enemy's civil population. The Government were determined that the best methods of pure defence should be elaborated with a view to defeating the attacks which might be made from the air. Far from the Government having been reticent about the plans for defending London, he sometimes wondered whether their announcements had been in conformity with what was prudent. The balloons and the curtain were not a separate form of defence, but were only a part of a considered scheme, including searchlights, guns, &c.

The firms had throughout been working hard in circumstances of great difficulty, and it was not the fact that the Government insisted upon a proper contract, to carry out the promise that there should be no profiteering, had in any way hindered the production of aircraft upon which the firms were concentrating. There was nothing in these estimates for any subsidy to internal air lines. He denied that there had been any snobbery in the Air Force. One-third of the pilots for the expansion scheme had been airmen. More than 20 per cent. of the pilot commissions had been given to airmen. He would say nothing of the Fleet Air Arm. That was a question that had to be investigated.

Although they still had some disappointments to face, there was no reason at all to suppose that the completion of the programme would not be accomplished by the end of the years originally suggested. With regard to sabotage, he had not the least doubt that the overwhelming majority of the men in the aircraft establishments would be horrified if they could be supposed to have had any hand in it. If there had been one or two acts of sabotage, they must be excrescences upon the system.

The motion that the Speaker do now leave the Chair was carried by 210 votes to 34—Government majority, 116.

The House then went into Committee of Supply on the Air Estimates. SIR D. HERBERT, Chairman of Committees (Watford, U.), in the Chair.

The votes for pay, works, buildings, and lands, technical and warlike stores, and civil aviation were agreed to. The Air Supplementary Estimate 1936 was also agreed to.

The House stood adjourned at 25 minutes to 2.

PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES

HOUSE OF LORDS

Divorce (Scotland) Bill, third reading.
British Shipping (Continuance of Subsidy) Bill.
Merchant Shipping Bill; and Public Health (Drainage of Trade Premises) Bill, Committee.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Army Estimates.
Supplementary Estimates for Army and Army Ordnance Factories, Committee.
Ways and Means, Committee.

COMMITTEES

House of Lords.—Unopposed: Newcastle-upon-Tyne Corporation (Trolley Vehicles) Provisional Order, &c., Chairman's Report.
House of Commons.—Standing Committee A: Road Traffic Bill, Room 12, at 11. Standing Committee B: Factories Bill, Room 16, at 11. Standing Committee C: Liverpool Industry Bill, Room 14, at 11. Group B: London and North Eastern Railway and Southern Railway, Room 4, at 11. Group C: Sheffield Corporation, Room 6, at 11. Group D: West Ham Corporation, Room 8, at 11. Group E: London Passenger Transport Board, Room 9, at 11. Group F: Cardiff Extension, Room 5, at 11. Public Accounts, Room 16, at 2.30.

U.S. FINANCIAL POLICY

MR. ECCLES ON BALANCING THE BUDGET

NEW YORK, March 15.—Mr. Eccles, Governor of the Federal Reserve Board, in a statement in Washington to-night, expressed himself in favour of the prompt balancing of the Federal Budget, if necessary by higher taxes on incomes and profits.

A reproduction of "The Sentence of Death" by the late Hon. John G. ...



Help us tear the veil from this tragic myste

Age and youth—men and women in the springtime and summer life—individuals whose lives this nation can ill afford to spare—swept away by the onrushing tide of cancer. Sixty thousand persons in Great Britain alone—cancer's toll in a single year!

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Bit by bit the veil is being sundered from the centuries-old mystery of cancer. Hour after hour, day after day, year after year, the tact of mankind's dread enemy are being revealed to science.

We, The Royal Cancer Hospital (Free) pioneers in the treatment this malignant disease, ask you to help us tear the veil from this tragic mystery. Research and treatment go forward. But upkeep costs more. Curable cases show a happy increase. But we shall not regard our mission as complete until we discover the cause of cancer, devise methods of controlling it—till finally cancer exists no more.

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Firms have a right to go to arbitration over the capital clause, and they have also that right on individual contracts. I am glad to pay tribute here to the invaluable assistance given to us by the Hardman Lever Committee, who are advisers on matters of principle and arbitrators in matters of dispute.

THE TRUE COMPARISON

I think I have said sufficient to enable the House to realize where we stand to-day in the military sphere. I would only ask hon. members to cast back their minds for two years. Let them compare the 53 squadrons of the Metropolitan Air Force of 1935 with the 124 squadrons which will be in being in a few months' time. Let them reflect on all that lies behind the bare numbers of first line aircraft, the men and material, and stores of all kinds, the elaboration of the organization, the organization, and the creation *de novo* of our ground adequate war potential. Only such comparison can give them a true appreciation of the real progress we are making in our vast undertaking.

In past years it has been my custom, in introducing these Estimates, to give some account of the activities of the Royal Air Force, particularly overseas. Last year events at home threw rather into the background even the more important operations of squadrons overseas. Nevertheless, the year has not been entirely devoid of incidents.

In particular the Royal Air Force cooperated actively and usefully in the various measures taken by the land forces to restore law and order in Palestine. The speed with which air support could be summoned by wireless to aid convoys engaged with armed bands was a notable feature during the disturbances. It is interesting to note that the average time taken by an aeroplane to leave the ground after receipt of a call for assistance was six minutes from the time when the call originated.

In other parts of the world, particularly in the neighbourhood of Aden, the Royal Air Force continued to discharge with success its usual duties of preserving or restoring law and order, often by demonstration flights only. Reference has been made in my noble friend's memorandum of the very important exercises which were undertaken last January at Singapore.

I must now turn to civil aviation, where several matters of first importance arise. One of the recommendations of the Gorell Committee on Civil Aviation, that control of airworthiness of civil aircraft should devolve upon a statutory autonomous board, has been accepted in principle, with the exception of the larger passenger-carrying aircraft. The requisite Parliamentary authority was given last year in the Air Navigation Act, and the Memorandum and Articles are now virtually settled.

AIR REGISTRATION BOARD

The Board will be known as the Air Registration Board. It will consist of between 16 to 18 persons representative of operators, constructors, and insurers of aircraft, assisted by co-opted members not within any of those categories, together with two members appointed by the Secretary of State. It is expected to commence operations under the chairmanship of Sir Maurice Denny within the next few weeks. It is hoped that the provisions of Part III of the Act, relating to third-party insurance for civil aircraft, will come into operation in the near future.

Another event of the first importance is the Report of the Maybury Committee on the development of civil aviation in Great Britain. Certain *ad hoc* proposals have already been implemented, in so far as the very far-reaching recommendations in the final report require State action they have been accepted

think we have every reason to be proud of the achievements of these Empire airmen.

Among the new British air mail services the Empire airmen have been working hard. Lagos, and a temporary service between Penang and Hong-kong, pending the establishment of a permanent connection between Hong-kong and the Empire trunk routes. It is expected that the Bermuda-New York service will begin operation during the present year. A proposal for the establishment of a trans-Tasman air service, which was discussed in conference last autumn at Wellington, still awaits approval of the Governments concerned.

WEATHER NEWS

REVISED ORGANIZATION

The expansion of the Royal Air Force and the development of civil flying in this country have greatly increased the demand for meteorological information, particularly in regard to night flying and flying in cloud. To meet this revised organization of stations has been evolved and is being brought into operation as rapidly as the necessary trained personnel can be obtained.

The organization will include a number of primary forecasting stations with scientific and observer staffs. These stations will have a series of subsidiary stations, situated on aerodromes, from which night or cloud flights are made. Trained assistants will man these stations and will provide local information and obtain forecasts from the main station as required.

For the Empire air routes the task of establishing the meteorological ground organization has made satisfactory progress, and there is a special section of the Meteorological Office to study North Atlantic weather conditions.

It is now necessary for me to return for a moment to the current financial year. Some further adjustment became necessary in our expenditure during the year beyond that provided for in the Supplementary Estimate presented in July last. Briefly, we have made more headway with our works and buildings programme than we had expected, with a resultant increase of expenditure, while in regard to equipment our expectations have not been fully realized. It is therefore necessary for me to present to the House a Token Supplementary Estimate for £100 to cover the major variations which I have mentioned and some less important variations which are also shown in the details of the Estimate.

"IMMENSE ACTIVITY"

It is impossible for me in a speech of any reasonable length to give an adequate idea of the immense activity which has prevailed during the past year right through the Royal Air Force, both in the ranks of the Service itself and in the departments of the Ministry. It is the more gratifying to me to be able to pay a deserved tribute to-day to the loyal manner in which the incessant demands of the expansion scheme have been met, both by the staffs of the departments and throughout the Service.

Throughout all the expansion, in every step on the industrial side and, in fact, in almost every aspect of our work, we have had the untiring and invaluable help of Lord Weir, who has brought to bear upon our problem his great industrial experience and his almost unique knowledge of the Air Force which he himself did so much to create.

The Ministry can make plans, and the nation can provide money, but the plans can only effectively be carried out without the loyal and intelligent cooperation of all departments and all ranks. Indeed, more is involved even than that. To make success in a scheme of expansion so vast, we need the willing help and cooperation of the aircraft industry and all other industries working for us, and the help and encouragement of the nation as a whole.

THE TASK AHEAD

All that is vital to us. All that we have had. The staffs of the departments and branches have given of their best. The existing personnel of the air stations and squadrons have received the continuous stream of recruits and infused them with their own spirit. The aircraft industry and other industries working with us have shown an earnest desire to cooperate with the Ministry in all that is possible. Finally, the nation at large has

Colonial practice. Referring to the entry of pilots into the Royal Air Force, the hon. member said that a more democratic system was needed. Class domination in the Service was a menace to public liberty and constitutional safeguards. There were not a few potential General Francos among those from whom the officer class was drawn. It was not a good thing that a huge force should be drawn up under the administrative control of a small socially and economically superior class. Intelligence and capacity were not the monopoly of the public schools and universities.

So long as the supply of warlike essentials was vested in rich and powerful men so long would the workers want to know how they stood. So-called reasonable profit only touched a fraction of what was involved, and if there was only a suspicion of great profit, making no one could be blamed if industrial hostility developed. If the production and supply of war material was to be left to private enterprise for private profit were to be expected the gigantic profits which were made during the war would be repeated.

The House ought to be told what was the value to the country of private flying to justify so much public expenditure. There was a case for subsidizing Imperial Air Routes, but no justification for the general use of routes, more commercial travelling through the air. Private exploitation of the air was as bad as had been the exploitation of the land.

THE AUXILIARY AIR FORCE

Mr. GRANT-FERRIS (N. St. Pancras, U.) referred to the Auxiliary Air Force, of which, he said, he was a member. That Force was expected to do more work than any other unit in the Territorial Army. During the summer months it was necessary to give up virtually every week-end and also one or two evenings in the week. The work was extremely difficult for both officers and other ranks, but, fortunately, the menace of being sent to the front was not a factor. It was possible to carry out all the duties. One of the difficulties they had to contend with was making sure that the requisite number of aircraft was always serviceable when the week-end came.

SIR H. SEELY (Berwick-on-Tweed, L.) said that his and his friend's work was in the Labour Opposition in voting against these Estimates. The Liberal Party regretted this expenditure and they meant to examine it very carefully in order that the country might get the best return for its money. Mr. Baldwin had said that he thought it was better that the Air Minister should be in the House of Lords. He (Sir H. Seely) thought it was very peculiar for a House of Commons man—unless he was expecting to be translated to another place—to say that the House of Lords was the proper place for a man in charge of a great spending Department. Such an attitude seemed entirely wrong in the eyes of the Parliamentary and democratic control. He (Sir H. Seely) hoped that next year the House would listen to the Air Minister himself presenting the Estimates.

The Government's policy had been to experiment with many different types of machine. Some people believed that there were among them machines which were not suitable for the work they had to do. Money might have been spent on such machines and contracts might have been given for them, but it would be far better to tear up the contracts than to use aircraft which was unsuitable or unsafe. More attention should be paid to the housing of Air Force personnel. If the Government experts believed in a balloon barrage they must produce one of an effective height. It had been said that they favoured a balloon which would reach only 10,000 ft. That would be useless for defending London.

"SHADOW" SCHEME CRITICIZED

LIEUT.-COL. MOORE-BRABAZON (Walsley, U.) said that materially we were behind-hand. The Air Ministry must take a good slice of the blame for that and not pass it on to the manufacturers. There was a fetish in official circles against what were called unapproved firms. We were embarking on an expensive programme in which 90 per cent. of aircraft engines were divided between two firms. If he were commander of an enemy air force he would only bomb two places, Derby and Bristol, but that would put our aircraft production into really serious danger. It was better if the "shadow" industry had been

London Disarmament Conference at Geneva in 1932 succeeded in preserving for this country the use of the bombing aeroplane, and because of his action we must take considerable responsibility for the failure to make progress in air disarmament. While it was necessary to have a certain amount of force in the world to counter the machinations of the evilly disposed, it should be in the hands of those who were peacemakers. There should be an international police force armed to prevent war.

Mr. WATKINS (Hackney, Central, Lab.) seconded the amendment, which, he said, raised the question whether the Government should not take the lead in an attempt to secure the abolition of the bombing aeroplane.

Mr. HOPKINSON (Mossley, Nat.) said that members of the Labour Party must dismiss from their minds the idea that a bombing aeroplane under the control of this country would necessarily be a device for tormenting women and children in other countries. The whole object of any armed force dominated by Englishmen should always be to bring about the defeat of the enemy, and not the civilian population.

Our scientists had been working wholeheartedly for many months to find a means by which air defence might be conducted without reprisals on the helpless civilian populations in enemy cities. That work had yielded remarkable results. It was becoming more certain that we could actually get command of the air without having to use methods such as he would never like to suggest English boys should be expected to use against an enemy. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. C. BROWN (Mansfield, Lab.) said that the policy of rearmament was at best a temporary expedient, and could not lay the foundation of a lasting peace. He appealed to the Government to explore the possibilities of initiating discussions between the Great Powers on the menace of being aerially bombed. Mr. LESLIE (Seaford, Lab.) said that if Britain had taken a strong lead at the first Disarmament Conference things would have been different to-day.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Stirling and Clackmannan, Western, Lab.) said the proposal for the abolition of military and naval air forces was not a Utopian idea. They had had an illustration of it on a small scale in the Saar. It was the only policy that held out any hope for the world.

SIR P. SASSOON'S REPLY

SIR P. SASSOON, replying to the debate, said that no country was more anxious than we were that the airways of the world should be free from the menace of being aerially bombed. The Government intended to seize the first opportunity to achieve that object. There were very great difficulties in the way of achieving international control of civil aviation. It would mean that we would lose the control of our Empire communications. Moreover, a scheme which might be effective in time of peace might become ineffective on the outbreak of war. It would be foolish to be too optimistic about getting some agreement on this question in the near future. On the general principle the Government were entirely in agreement. They did not wish, and he was sure the House did not wish, to give the appearance that there was any real division of opinion on this matter. He hoped that the amendment would not be pressed to a division.

The amendment was negatived by 175 votes to 119—Government majority, 56.

The general debate was continued by Mr. HARTIE (Glasgow, Springburn, Lab.), CAPTAIN BALFOUR (Isle of Thanet, U.), Mr. MANDER, and Mr. SIMMONS (Birmingham, Duddleston, U.).

AIR ATTACK

SIR T. INSKIP ON METHODS OF DEFENCE

SIR T. INSKIP, Minister for the Coordination of Defence (Farnham, U.) deprecated any direct reference to any particular nation as though that nation was the object of any hosannas. It was the duty of this country to be better to commit ourselves to the declaration of the Prime Minister that we could not suffer any inferiority in the air with any nation within striking distance of this country. He did not think that we were exposed to air attack particularly in the Channel. He was, however, minded to suggest, On the other hand,

favour balancing the Budget at the expense of the destitute and unemployed. Detailing his views on prices and credit, Mr. Eccles pledged a continuance of the easy money policy. With large numbers still unemployed any move towards tightening money would be not only anti-social but also uneconomic. The remedy for price inflation was a broad expansion of production rather than a tightening of money rates. He declared that increased wages and shorter hours, which would restrict production, would not at present interest the public generally, nor be of real interest to the workers themselves.—Reuter.

WAR OFFICE AND WHITE CITY GROUNDS

PLAN FOR ANTI-AIRCRAFT TRAINING

Part of the White City grounds may be used by the War Office as a training headquarters site for certain West London anti-aircraft units. A proposal to acquire part of the grounds has been made, and, if negotiations are successful, work on new buildings will be begun immediately. It is thought that one of the units which would be accommodated at the White City would be the 53rd A.A. Brigade, R.A., now using premises at Lytton Grove, Putney. Others would be two companies of the 26th A.A. Battalion, R.E., and one company of the A.A. Divisional R.A.S.C.

DRAPERS' INSTITUTION

A SUM OF £15,023 SUBSCRIBED

A sum of £15,023 13s. 6d. in aid of the Drapers' Institution and Cottage Homes was subscribed in response to the appeal on the occasion of the institution's 105th anniversary at the annual festival dinner held at Drapers' Hall, Throgmorton Street, E.C., last night.

Mr. E. GEORGE SHINNER, the president of the appeal, who presided, said that the institution was the drapery trade's oldest and greatest charity. For 105 years it had played the part of the good Samaritan by helping necessitous members of the wholesale and retail textile trade. They had now 200 old people living in beautiful surroundings on their estate at Mill Hill—with no worry about rent, rates, or repairs. Medical attendance was provided, and, in addition, there was a nursing home, with a qualified nurse, on the estate. The institution did not, however, receive the support which it needed. At least £30,000 was required annually, and it was desirable that each of the 120 cottages should be endowed. Mr. FRANK BEARMAN, principal of Bearman's, Limited, of Leytonstone, was announced as president of the appeal in the forthcoming year.

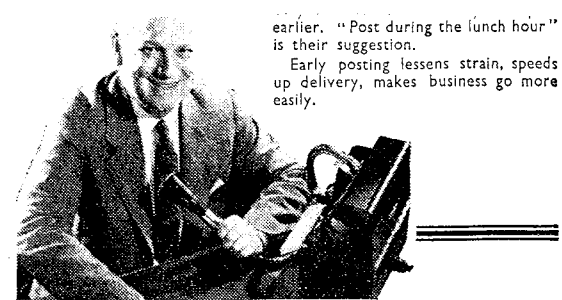
LAW CLERKS' BENEVOLENCE

LORD JUSTICE GREENE presided at the 105th anniversary dinner in aid of the United Law Clerks' Society, held at the Connaught Rooms last night, when subscriptions amounting to £680 were received. Proposing the toast of "The Society," the chairman said that law clerks were a body of men essential to the administration of the law, and they brought to it a devotion to duty and a single-mindedness which were the admiration of everyone who knew their work.

Mr. HARRY ELLIS STAPLEY (hon. treasurer), in reply, said that membership of the society was one of the best investments a young law clerk could make. Since its inception it had distributed in benefits and benevolent grants more than £355,000, and last year those items absorbed £11,550. Superannuation benefits to old and disabled members alone amounted to close on £7,800.

Sir REGINALD POOLE proposed the toast of "The Legal Profession," which was acknowledged by JUDGE EARENGEY.

Mr. C. E. MACKLIN (chairman of the stewards) proposed "The Health of the Guests," and Mrs. R. COLEMAN-HARDY HORNE, representing the Society's D. M. F. R. O. S. K. C., gave the toast of "The Chairman."



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FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

BERLIN, MARCH 15

While on a voyage from England to Copenhagen the 1,500-ton steamer Erika, of Stettin, ran aground west of Skagen (Denmark). The ship had no wireless, and therefore sent news of her distress by a carrier pigeon, which was picked up yesterday evening at a village near Gothenburg, 60 miles west of Skagen. A Danish salvage steamer has gone to her rescue.

"KIND-HEARTED" CORPORAL REDUCED TO RANKS

CORPORAL ARTHUR PRECEE, of the 1st Battalion, The Worcestershire Regiment, who was stated at an Aldershot Court-martial to have taken his men early-morning cups of tea while they were in bed, has been sentenced to be reduced to the ranks. He was found guilty of neglecting to obey battalion standing orders, which forbid non-commissioned officers trading with private soldiers, and of breaking out of the barracks when under open arrest. At the trial it was stated on behalf of Precee that he acted out of kindness of heart and that his profit was negligible. His first thought, it was added, was for his men. The findings and sentence were made known yesterday.

1,100 ON STRIKE BECAUSE OF ONE GIRL

Negotiations between four unions and the management concerning the strike at the works of Messrs. Parkinson and Cowan (Gas Meters), Limited, Stretford, Manchester, were adjourned yesterday until to-day. Eleven hundred workers—500 at Stretford and 600 at the firm's London branches—have been on strike for 16 days because one girl refuses to join the National Union of General and Municipal Workers. The girl has left her home in Salford and is staying with friends to avoid demonstrations.

R.A.F. OFFICER KILLED

The Air Ministry announced last night that Flight Lieutenant Richard William Wicks lost his life in an aircraft accident which occurred yesterday at Saxelby, near Melton Mowbray. He was pilot and sole occupant of the aeroplane. Flight Lieutenant Wicks is shown in the current R.A.F. List as a lieutenant of the Royal Navy holding an R.A.F. commission. This is the fifteenth R.A.F. accident this year, bringing the number of deaths to 23.

MILK STRIKE AT ILFORD

There is a possibility that a strike of bottlers at the Ilford depot of United Dairies will spread to other depots of the firm in London. The night shift transport men at Ilford left work last night and it was expected that the day shift would follow suit to-day. The strike committee stated last night that the drivers gave ample notice so that the firm would arrange for supplies to hospitals to be made as usual.

CHURCH LADS' BRIGADE DISPLAY AT GUILDHALL

The London Diocesan Regiment of the Church Lads' Brigade gave a display at Guildhall last night, and afterwards Lady Pollock presented trophies to the winning companies. Addressing the parade at the close of the display, Sir ADRIAN POLLOCK, who presided, said the old London Division had given up its independence to become the London Diocesan Regiment of the Church Lads' Brigade. The brigade had a new constitution and one uniform for the whole of the country. It now stood at a single-hearted body free from any ties with the armed forces of the Crown. Its mission was spiritual. Sir HUGH TRENKLE, as inspecting officer, congratulated the guard of honour and the parade generally on the turn out. The competition results were:—St. Saviour, Poplar; Shields for Religious Knowledge; Athletic Sports, Barking and Spinning; St. Mark, Noel Park, the Amateurs; Shield for Snare Drums; Maracas, the Drum and Fife Band Challenge Shield; Rowing and Harrow, the Musketry Championship; and by Mr. Francis D. Morgan, K.C., gave the toast of "The Chairman."