

Ready in the Air

SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR'S statement to the House of Commons last week that the Air Force sees before it, "now clearly attainable, the glittering prize of air supremacy," may or may not mean that the invasion of Europe is at hand. But it does mean that the Air Force has stood the strain of its bombing offensives, and will not now fail. It will just go on giving and taking these stupendous blows until the skyroad to Berlin is clear. But let us not forget the price. Already, Mr. Churchill told us, it has lost fifty thousand men—forty thousand killed, ten thousand missing. What percentage that is of the number of men engaged we do not know; but we know that it is very high by comparison with land and sea forces; and we know too that the great majority of those men were at school or just away from school when the war started. They went into the Air Force knowing that many of them would live a few weeks after the completion of their training, that the lucky ones would last months, and only the supremely lucky count their service in years. Because they had that knowledge they left us as men leave who go on high and dangerous missions, with personal ambitions all laid aside and the selfishness that weighs the rest of us down all purged away; fifty thousand boys became suddenly men, and as suddenly, and for ever, the creators of a legend. It is a bitter price, and we know that only half of it has yet been paid. It is bitter for our enemies too, whose airmen, like ours, are boys, innocent of the follies and devilries of their rulers, but neither able nor anxious to desert them; bitter for the whole world, but a cup that the whole world must now drink to the dregs. Our airmen are ready to clear the way to Berlin. If the rest of us are not busy clearing other ways when they return, the "visible, measurable, and progressive" results the Air Minister says they are now achieving will either mock them when peace comes or will be used by them to make whited sepulchres of us.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

SHAVING PAPER

Sir,—L. A. Doyle's letter in your issue of February 18 tells us nothing of value about *The Listener*, but it tells us a lot about the mental limitations of L. A. Doyle. I could pity him if he had not been so rude and dogmatic. Let us examine the issue which contains his letter in the light of his statement that apart from the programmes *The Listener* is "mere shaving paper." It reveals him as one who is not interested in intelligent and well-written leading articles on questions of the day, the opinions of his fellow-listeners matter nothing to him, the outer world can go hang for all he cares to read about it, various aspects of our war effort leave him cold, and even the vitally important meat-rationing experiment that he will have to submit to next week just makes him yawn. If it is too much to expect him to be interested in Russia and her peoples or the future of the German nation, perhaps his own health and food would touch him. But it's all just "junk" to him: even the only honest film criticism printed in this country or the woodcuts of genius that adorn many of the articles. I refuse to believe that the rest of Jackson's Bay share his views, as he affirms they do. Go ahead, Mr. Editor, with your stimulating and unique paper, and let the heathen rage.

GRATEFUL GEORGE (Invercargill).

Sir,—A correspondent from Jackson's Bay assures you that apart from the programmes *The Listener* is "mere shaving paper." You may like to know of another opinion. I find *The Listener* a most stimulating weekly magazine, the only New Zealand one available at present, and value highly the "junk" of topical articles, book and film reviews, overseas reprints, and illustrations. The programmes seem, for wartime, adequate. The whole thing is cheap at the price, too.—J.S. (Dunedin).

(We have had several more letters in the same strain, but would blush to print them.—Ed.).

MAORIS AFTER THE WAR

Sir,—Maha Winiata condemns the suggestion that Maori soldiers be used as a permanent Imperial force. Does his view coincide with Maori opinion generally? It must be admitted that an occupying force will be required to keep order in the Pacific. Is the British Empire to be represented by the English, the Irish, the Scots and the Welsh and all other Britons except the Maori? It would be particularly fitting that Maori troops should occupy Tokyo in those islands whence the Caucasian ancestors of the Maori were driven by the Mongol away back in ancient days.

It seems common sense that our guardians should be chosen from those best able to act the part, and who can say that the Maori soldier is not fit to be guardian of our rights and privileges?

HUGH PATTERSON (Gisborne).

MRS. BEETON

Sir,—I read with a good deal of amusement "1944's" article, "First Catch Your Hare." So poor Mrs. Beeton, to use a vulgarism, is getting it in the neck. Her mistakes: (1) No recipes for children. Strange to say, special recipes didn't seem necessary; children were given three good nourishing meals a day, with no bits and pieces in between,

beginning the day, not with an early cup of tea, but with a plate of good Scotch oatmeal porridge—cooked several hours in a double saucepan—none of these pre-digested-cooked-in-three-minutes foods. Tinned foods or cooked meats were a rarity—forbidden in my home. Bread, cakes, potted meats, jams, jellies, pickles, wine, etc., were all home-made, and I don't remember any cookery book but "Mrs. Beeton"; neither do I remember any mother being worried to know whether her children were getting enough A.B.C. vitamins or two many X.Y.Z.'s. The vitamin nightmare, like so many other diseases, hadn't developed in Mrs. Beeton's day.

(2) "1944" says:—"The greater part of her book is, in fact, filled with meat recipes." Perhaps pages were missed from the book "1944" had; my copy contains over 2000 pages, with under one-fifth of them devoted to meat recipes.

(3) Prices of kitchen furniture—certainly not much use for furnishing now-a-days, but interesting if only to show up the present day stupidity of continually pushing up wages, only to find everything else pushed up in price. In the days of Mrs. Beeton, 30/- to £2 was a good weekly wage.

(4) "Home influence"—I must admit that the advice might be more needed then than now. Delicatessen shops were few and far between, and certainly there were no cars in which one could run round in to pick up cooked meats, etc. for dinner when golf, croquet, bridge parties had kept one late.

Perhaps "Mrs. Beeton" is hopelessly out of date, but never once has she let me down when seeking information, which the up-to-date cookery books seem to imagine one should know, whether a born cook or not.—TAN (Auckland).

STILL THERE?

Sir,—I wish kindly folk would abandon that greeting to the elderly—"How are you keeping?" It always strikes me as rather absurd, and it is a definite reminder that one is now looked on somewhat as a sack of doubtful potatoes, or a case of apples too long out of cold storage. The inquiry indicates surprise at one's still being there at all, mixed with the conviction that probably a rot has set in.

"SEVENTY" (Eastbourne).

"EASY ACES"

Sir,—At 8.15 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, all ZB stations put over "Easy Aces"; each station giving a different programme. Thus Dunedin, for instance, gives a programme that we heard in Wellington a month previously, and so on. Would it not be possible to change the days on some of the stations, and then by tuning in where it fitted, those that wished could have "Easy Aces" seven evenings a week and have at least one good laugh a day. I for one would be grateful.

"4 ACES" (Johnsonville).

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENTS

F.M. (Lower Hutt), "Douthree" (Gisborne), Francis Clark (Tapanui), and H. Alexander (Wellington): Letters received. Interesting, too. But as you all object to the use of our columns for "any sort of junk" (as one of you so politely puts it) but programmes, you must, of course, end in our waste-paper basket.—Ed.).