

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

(continued from page 5)

ROYAL AIR FORCE

Sir.—May I invite the help of your readers in a matter which is of considerable public interest? As it will be some years before the full official history of the war is published, arrangements have been made for a preliminary history of the war in the air, covering the 1939-45 period, to be written under the joint authorship of Denis Richards and Hilary St. George Saunders, the aim being to produce a work which will combine accuracy and impartiality with wide appeal. As will be realised, official records in themselves, however complete (and we have a first-class collection) are inevitably deficient in "life" and "atmosphere"—qualities which it is very important to recapture if the History is to be more than a purely academic study. We therefore hope to supplement our official records by collecting first-hand stories and accounts of conditions and operations from those who served in the Royal Air Force during the war. To this end we have officially invited stories from those still serving, but we also need to profit by the experiences of those who have now been released from the Royal Air Force. It is in this respect that the help of your readers who have belonged to the service or have had experience with it, would be so valuable.

Any officer, non-commissioned officer or other rank who served with or was attached to the Royal Air Force during the period of hostilities is invited, therefore, to send to the Head of the Air Historical Branch, Air Ministry, Whitehall, details of any action or event personally experienced or witnessed which strongly impressed him as typical of the spirit of the service or the conditions and atmosphere in which operations were conducted. Consideration will be given to all incidents reported wherever they took place—whether illustrating conditions and operations in or over Europe, the Western Desert, the Burmese jungle, or the high seas. The comparatively unimportant incident, if sufficiently colourful, may be as valuable as the account of a major operation.

All information submitted should be as circumstantial and as carefully authenticated as possible in order that it may be compared with official records.

By this means we hope to fix for posterity a memorable and faithful picture of our great national wartime effort in the air.

P. B. JOUBERT,
Air Chief Marshal.

(Public Relations Office, Air Ministry,
Whitehall, London).

THE BROKEN REED

Sir.—The articles on Indonesia recently published by you underline the fact that the United Nations Organisation is doomed to failure as an instrument for securing permanent world peace. Like the late lamented League of Nations, the Security Council is full of good intentions, but has no power adequate for enforcing its decisions—as witness Dutch refusal to permit UN investigation in Indonesia and Russian actions in regard to the Balkans. The world is leaning on a broken reed.

The reasons for failure are chiefly two: First, the nations are foolish enough to suppose that a gathering of representatives of so-called sovereign nations,

each with a pistol in his pocket and meeting under conditions of intense insecurity, will produce permanent world peace. The situation is aggravated by the fact that whereas most of the representatives possess only single-chambered one-shot weapons, three of them have repeating automatics—the atom bomb potentialities. Second: ignorance or wilful ignoring of history which supports the contention that leagues of so-called sovereign states have never yet prevented war, but on the contrary invariably end in war amongst the members.

The Roman Empire imposed peace on the then known world for 250 years. When communities became nations, internal wars between petty princes and barons ceased because the national King was supreme ruler. British rule in India ended internal wars between princes. British rule in New Zealand ended intertribal Maori wars. The obvious lesson is that not until the nations are prepared to surrender all matters pertaining to armed forces and armaments to a World Authority so that there shall be only one armed force in the world, will there be permanent peace. The "sovereignty" in these matters that the nations chatter so much about is an illusion. National representatives will then be able to meet and confer about other affairs without any pistols in their pockets and under conditions of security favourable to peace. How tragically comic it is that the human mind, confronted with a matter demanding immediate attention, side-steps it and concerns itself with other affairs that are of no importance so long as this vital first thing is neglected.

J. MALTON MURRAY
(Oamaru).

ENDOCRINE

FOR all our human weakness and rascality
We now can blame the glands of personality:
We're good, if these queer organs function
rightly,
And bad, whenever they're unbalanced slightly.
Hitler—Goering, Goebbels—all the band
Went wrong because their glands got out of
hand,
And thus the course of history may be changed
If these mysterious bodies be deranged.
Active adrenal glands can build a hero—
When over-active, they may mould a Nero;
And—tho' the nation may seem high-falutin'—
Hyperthyroidism produced Rasputin.
Mussolini was often in a nasty humour—
Let's put it down to parathyroid tumour.
The Man of Destiny worked fast, went far—
Then crashed; Because of some unlucky star?
Because Dame Fortune chose at last to frown?
Nay! His pituitary let him down—
So Boney landed up on St. Helena.
And last of all we come to Messalina,
Who now, along with other wanton ladies,
Doubtless bewails her wickedness in Hades.
Yet might the demons pause in their grim
task
Of stoking infernal fires—might pause and ask
Why these poor females must endure damnation
All on account of glandular aberration—
Methinks the Devil himself should feel compunction
For trying folks with endocrine dysfunction.

SO, next time Junior
kicks his little
brother
And uses fatigues upon
his mother—
Rise not in wrath with
strap between your
hands—
It's just the little darling's
ductless glands!



—Joan Hyde

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