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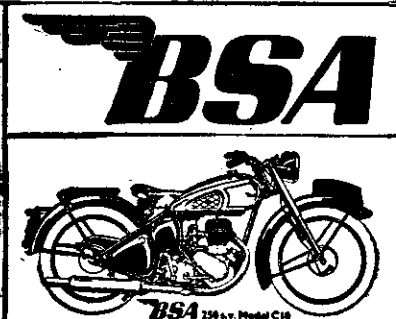


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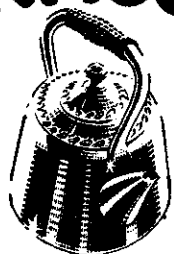
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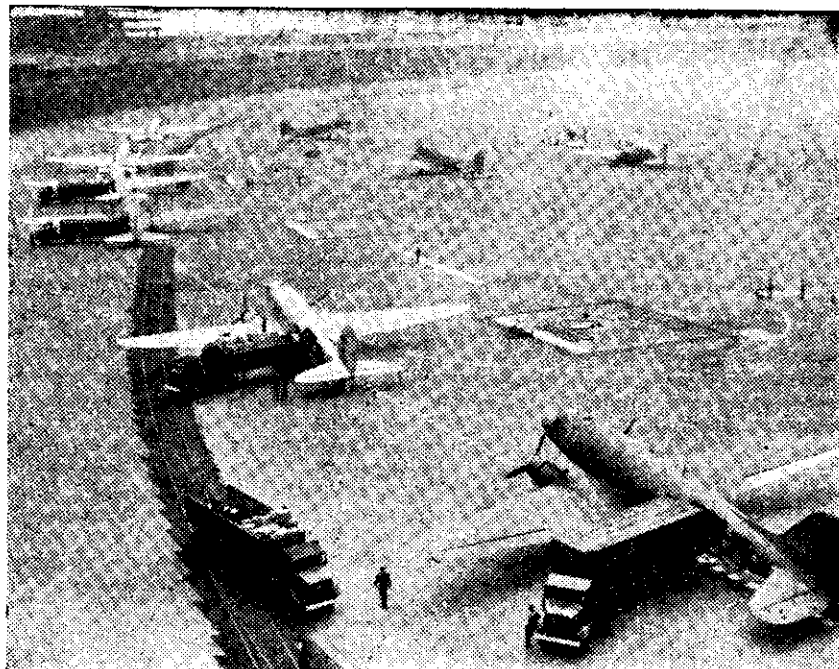
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BERLIN'S Emergency Food arrives by air armada. A scene at Tempelhof Airport

## BERLIN AIRLIFT

Topical Documentary from BBC

"YOU are three miles from touchdown . . . Check that your undercarriage is down and locked, and lose altitude at the rate of 600 feet a minute. . . You are on the glidepath now. . . You are half-a-mile from touchdown . . . The runway is clear. Go ahead and land visually now."

At any moment in time, according to a senior RAF officer in Germany, at least 40 aircraft are in the air flying in and out of blockaded Berlin. The documentary programme *The Berlin Airlift*, which has just arrived from the BBC, tells the story of this great operation and of the organisation that enables the Western Powers to keep it going. If the weather clamps down—it is winter in Berlin—the planes have still got to be brought in somewhere, the RAF officer said. And even in conditions that the layman would consider impossible for flying they keep coming in, the pilots guided by the distorted, disembodied voices of ground controllers directing them through the rain and cloud: "Turn right three degrees . . . check undercarriage and flaps for landing . . . the runway is clear. . ."

It was eight months ago, in June, 1948, that the Russians stopped the transport of supplies by road, rail, and water to the western sectors of Berlin, and the powers concerned decided to maintain their own people and the inhabitants of the British, American, and French zones by air. To-day, as *The Listener* goes to press, this great feat of organisation and international co-operation shows no sign of stopping. And when it does stop it will not be forgotten, for it has coined a new word in the English language. *The Berlin Airlift* describes the operation in all its phases, and was compiled by Tom Waldron of the BBC from recorded inter-

views he made with the men who are running it.

Waldron talked to officers of the Rhine Army who control the loading of the planes, to the directors of the Rear Airfield Supply Organisation, and to the British and American fliers themselves, the men who actually operate the lift. He recorded the voices of German children singing a greeting to the 150th aircraft to land on the 150th day of operations—the song they sang (in English) was "My Bonny Lies Over the Ocean"—and talked to the men who built additional runways, to civilian fliers of the charter aircraft which brought in 17,000 tons in 100 days, and to those responsible for the unloading and distribution of food and coal.

### Two Every Three Minutes

How can 40 aircraft be kept in the air all the time? The programme explains that there are two corridors into Berlin, each 20 miles wide, and one corridor out. The distance from the supplying airfields to the aerodromes in Berlin itself—Gatow used by the Americans and Tempelhof by the British—is about 200 miles. With an average flying time of an hour for each aircraft and a plane landing at each drome every three minutes, the two corridors must contain 20 aircraft each at any time. How they are kept there is explained by one of the airmen interviewed by Waldron: "The answer is teamwork," he says, "the whole operation depends on teamwork." Americans, British, Germans—airmen, soldiers, and civilians—all co-operate to make the airlift a success.

*The Berlin Airlift* will be heard from 3YA at 7.50 p.m. on Tuesday, February 15, 1YA at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 16, 4YA at 9.30 p.m. on Thursday, February 17, and 2YA at 8.0 p.m. on Friday, February 18.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, FEBRUARY 11