

AIRMAN GOVERNOR-GENERAL Impressions of Sir Cyril Newall

FOR the first time in history New Zealand is to have an airman Governor-General—Marshal of the Air Force Sir Cyril Newall, G.C.B., K.C.B., C.M.G., C.B.E., A.M. When future historians write their considered opinions on the present conflict, his work in building up the vast expansion of the British Air Force will be recognised as one of the greatest tasks ever achieved by a single individual. For the past three years, working day and night, he has planned and organised and carried to completion the immense air resources of Britain; daily communiqués fill in the graphic results of his achievement.

What manner of man has been chosen as His Majesty's representative in New Zealand? Here is a picture by an officer of the Royal New Zealand Air Force who knew Sir Cyril in Egypt when he commanded the Air Force in the Middle East, a post which had its political as well as its important military aspects:

"He is a man of outstanding personality and great personal charm, with exceptional gifts of organisation. He is a great worker, with an amazing capacity for detail without seeking it. When he was in Egypt, from 1931 to 1934, he knew more about the various Air Force units than the men who belonged to them. He always made a point of visiting every unit under his command, spending many hours in the air flying from one to the other. And he always stood up for his men and his staff. Although he was extremely popular with everyone, there was no slackness, and most certainly no inefficiency. Sir Cyril Newall has had more to do with the expansion of the Royal Air Force than any other single individual, for he has seen it through almost from the beginning."

He Began with Wood and Wire

It might be mentioned that the new Governor-General began his air career in a machine which was mostly wood and wire. That was in 1910 when he took a year's leave from India so that he could learn to fly, so convinced was he of the future of the air. That machine did not fall to pieces and he gained his pilot's certificate in 1911, after which he tried to break down Army prejudice against the air, though not with any great success until the war of 1914-18. Sir Cyril is a son of the late Lieut.-Colonel William Newall, was educated for the Army, and passed through Sandhurst. At the age of 19 he was commissioned with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. He is now 53. In 1922 he married May Dulcie Wendell, but his wife died two years later. He married again, in 1925, Olive Tennyson Foster, daughter of Mrs. Francis Storer Eaton, of Boston, U.S.A. He has one son and two daughters. Lady Newall will be the first American-born "First Lady" to preside over Government House in New Zealand.

Sir Cyril is the only officer of high rank to hold the Albert Medal, a distinction usually awarded only for peacetime heroism. When a Royal Flying

Corps bomb store, containing 2,000 high explosive bombs, caught fire he played a hose through a hole made by the flames and then led a small party into the building when the bombs threatened to blow everything, including the surrounding district, sky-high. The fire was quenched. That was in 1916 when he was enjoying a rest from France.

Sir Cyril was soon in the thick of the fighting when war broke in 1914. As a Flight Commander he went straight to France with the No. 1 Squadron, and in those days air fighting was done with machines which are now museum pieces. By 1915 he was Wing Commander with the 41st Bombing Wing which carried out furious operations against German objectives, so that he knows the political and military effect of bombing behind

the enemy lines. By 1917 he had command of his own squadron and his fame had spread abroad. He emerged from the war with three rows of ribbons on his tunic, including French, Belgian, and Italian decorations, and a permanent post with the newly constituted Royal Air Force.

No Stunting

The new Governor-General has one pet hate—stunt flyers. When the cadets at Cranwell indulged in this spectacular habit he threatened them with dire penalties and told them: "The general public regards the aeroplane as a nuisance—and I agree with the general public." His passion is work, and a desire to get things done. Long before this war he courageously cut through red tape and, if certain departments delayed him and his plans, he short-circuited them.

From 1926 to 1931 Sir Cyril was at the Air Ministry, first as Director of Operations and Intelligence and then as Deputy Chief of Air Staff. After a spell

as commander of the heavy bombers he went to Egypt. Then, in 1934, he returned to London for another period at the Air Ministry as Air Member for Supply and Organisation, succeeding Sir Edward Ellington as Chief of the Air Staff in 1937.

Though life in New Zealand will be quiet after the excitements of the last three years, he will still be able to indulge his hobbies of fishing and gardening.

Sir Cyril and Lady Newall have two homes, a house at Tunbridge Wells, in Surrey, and a flat in Ryder Street, St. James' Square, London. Since the outbreak of war they have lived at their flat, which is filled with art treasures. Lady Newall, who has a flair for organisation, has been working 12 hours a day on all sorts of national service, travelling periodically to their country home to keep an eye on the comfort of evacuated mothers and children who are installed there.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DAKAR

DAKAR, one of the head-line place-names in the news, will be one of the war zones from which further action may be expected. Because of its geographical position it is of vital interest to Britain in her war against enemy raiders. General de Gaulle's expedition, although it ended unfavourably for us, will perhaps be followed by others of greatly increased strength.

Naval and Air Base

There are two reasons for the present importance of Dakar. It is a fortified naval station and an important air base. The town itself lies on the southern side of Cape Verde, on the bay of Goree, and is the jumping off port for 'planes flying from the African coast to South America, the shortest route between the two continents. All the shipping routes which traverse the Atlantic, especially those going to Europe from South Africa and round the Cape of Good Hope, converge on Cape Verde, passing close to the coast. That is why enemy submarines, operating from Dakar, could prey with ease on British shipping in the Atlantic. A glance at the map of the world reveals that Dakar, by air route, is within striking distance of the two air bases, Natal and Pernambuco in Brazil, South America. Jean Batten, the New Zealand airwoman, made this flight in the early days of her amazing career.

Dakar is not unknown to many New Zealand soldiers of the last war. When the Division was moved to France several troopships transporting reinforcements to England took refuge there when German submarines became dangerous.

There is another reason for Dakar's importance at the moment. A French air route crosses the Sahara Desert from Algiers and Oran, on the Mediterranean coast, to Garo, in French Sudan, near the Niger River. Garo is a central terminal with air routes branching to Dakar, Liberia, the Gold Coast, Nigeria, and all

the other territories along the Gulf of Guinea. By this air route French troops stationed at Dakar could be easily reinforced by flying men and munitions down from Algiers. Another French air route from Tangier also has its terminal at Dakar, following along the Atlantic coast.

British Colonies

The tiny British Crown Colony of Gambia lies on the south border of Senegal (of which Dakar is the principal port) and Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and Nigera, are all within striking distance and surrounded by French territory. In recent years the French have centralised the administration of their West African possessions, making Dakar the headquarters for the territories of Senegal, French Sudan, French Guinea, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Upper Volta, Mauritania, and the Niger, an area of 1,500,000 square miles, extending from the Atlantic coast to the interior of the Sahara. The total population of this area numbers 12,583,111 people, of whom only 11,747 are European, mostly French. Since the outbreak of war, however, the French garrisons have been greatly strengthened.

Fertile Coastal Belt

Although vast stretches of French West Africa are almost barren desert, the land along the coastal regions is fertile, producing great quantities of nuts, palm oil, gums, fruit, rubber, cotton, and cocoa. From the forests of Senegal come ebony and other valuable timbers.

Dakar itself, has a fine, sheltered harbour, guarded by the island of Goree, which was incorporated in 1929. Apart from its naval base and air port it has spacious commercial docks and is the terminus of railways running north to St. Louis, the old capital of Senegal, and to the Niger River, far inland. All the products of French West Africa are shipped from this port, which is also a port of call for many ships on the Home-Australian route.

BOREDOM IN CAMP Why Soldiers Need Books

NAPOLEON'S dictum is still true—"an army marches on its stomach." But to-day there is more to it than that. Time, in marching on, brought with it recreational luxuries undreamt of at Waterloo. To-day morale and fighting fitness owe so much to a long list of such "luxuries" that in our camps many have become common necessities.

And high on the list is the camp library. There the men laugh at boredom which would "find some mischief for idle hands to do." To combat boredom during leisure hours our fighting forces need books, more books, and still more books. For example, 5,000 are wanted at once for the new camp at Waiouru.

The men again look to the public Gifts, however small, of readable books, clean and in good repair, will be thankfully received at and forwarded from your Public Library. Or you may mark them "War Library Service" and send direct to the Officer in Charge, Country Library Service, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.

Not "Kidstokes"

One result of their reading the frothier papers has been to make the N.Z. troops realise the high quality of the New Zealand Press. One man put a general opinion in his own words: "I've often seen where jokers from Home have said what fine papers we have in New Zealand; and I thought it was just kidstokes. It's not; it's right! I'd give the whole bunch of these for twenty minutes of the old "—", naming one of our metropolitan daily papers. There would be something of nostalgia in that preference, but there was also sound judgment. — N.Z. Official War Correspondent.