

HISTORY AS IT HAPPENS

In this section weekly will appear a day by day record of the events of history in the making. As some time elapses in the publication of "The Listener" this diary is one week retrospective.

Thursday, January 16

Abyssinia was reported to be seething with revolt and the spread of the rebellion had caused the Italians much anxiety. General Nasi led strong forces from Addis Ababa to Goja in an attempt to quell disturbances. Abyssinian forces were moving against the Italians with supplies from the Sudan and from the Italian Army.

In evidence before the Foreign Affairs Committee, Cordell Hull said: "If Britain were defeated Germany could easily cross the Atlantic unless America was prepared to do what Britain is doing now. If Germany wins, the Atlantic will prove little barrier."

Vice-Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham of the Mediterranean fleet was promoted to Admiral.

Friday, January 17

For the second successive night and the fourth time in eight days, British bombers carried out a concentrated attack on Wilhelmshaven.

H. L. Stimson in evidence before the Foreign Affairs Committee on the Lease and Lend Bill, said that the United States faces a more critical period than in 1917, and urged prompt approval of the Bill.

The Admiralty announced that the cruiser Southampton had been hit during the air raid, took fire, and subsequently had to be sunk by British forces when it was found to be impracticable to tow her to port. The illustrious returned to port under her own power.

Several places in the West of England were bombed, and fires, some serious, were started in Bristol.

The R.A.F. forced the Italians to abandon several air bases east of Akdar.

Saturday and Sunday, January 18 and 19

In a surprise speech at Glasgow Mr. Churchill said, "Before us lie dangers which, if we neglect anything, may be vital. My one aim is to extirpate Hitlerism from Europe, and we will not fail mankind at this turning point. We are still only a partially armed nation, but I hope that at the end of this year or at the beginning of the next, by air and land we will be at no disadvantage in equipment against Germany's."

A very heavy raid was made by a large force of enemy aircraft on Malta.

Herbert Morrison, Minister of Home Security, announced that he was taking power to impose compulsory part-time service in all branches of the civil defence forces for men and women between 16 and 60.

Monday, January 20

British mobilised forces advanced some miles into Eritrea. The Italians abandoned Kassala.

Units of the Mediterranean fleet moved up to join in the bombardment of Tobruk. The R.A.F. caused huge fires on the petrol dumps.

The Thai High Command announced that the navy was engaged in operations to destroy the Indo-China fleet.

Tuesday, January 21

The Germans announced that Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini met at an unspecified place.

When Roosevelt was inaugurated as President of the United States for the third term, he made an outstanding speech on democratic aspirations.

Rumours continued to be published concerning the wide revolt and clashes in Rumania.

Marshal Petain and M. Laval were reported to have patched up their differences.

Wednesday, January 22

British Imperial Forces were reported to be attacking Tobruk, and a Cairo communique stated that operations were proceeding with a successful penetration to a depth of over 5 miles on a broad front.

Catania, the base for the German Stukas in Sicily, was raided by the R.A.F.

Japanese foreign policy was declared by Mr. Matusoka to be in accord with the Three-Power-Pact and the creation of "a new order in Greater East Asia."

J. P. Kennedy, former United States Ambassador in London, gave evidence on the Aid to Britain Bill, and said that unless Britain gets more ships this year her shipping and food problem will become critical.

According to advice from Yugoslavia severe fighting between the Rumanian Army and members of the Iron Guard spread to many parts of the country, and General Antonescu had established a military dictatorship.

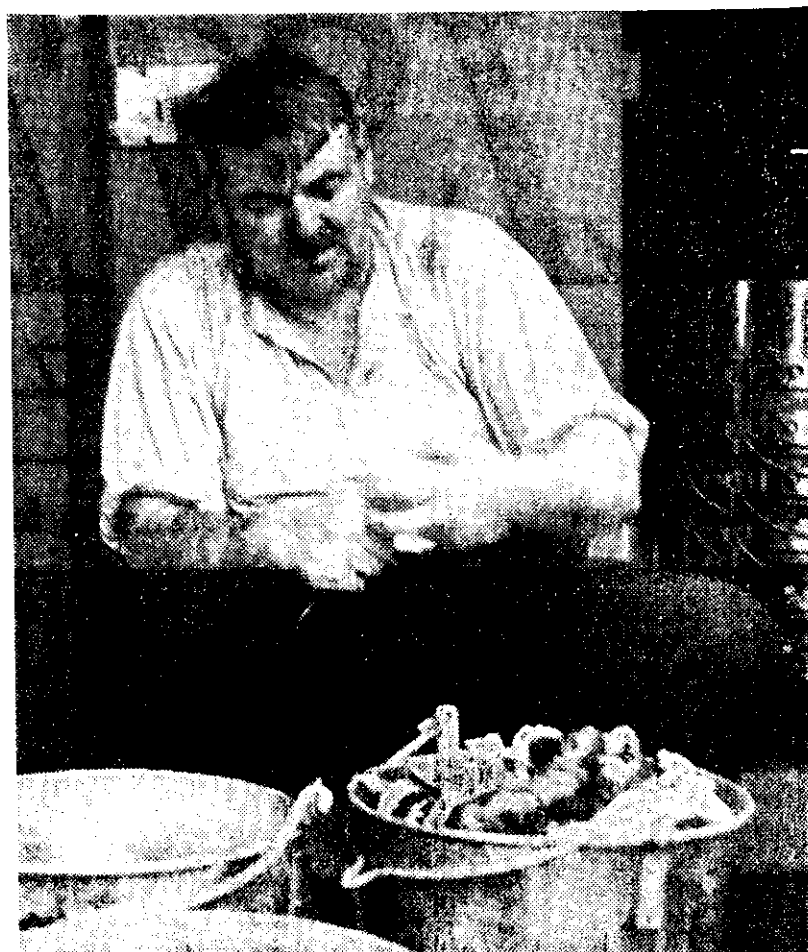
Hazardous Job for Flyers

THE most trying condition known to airmen—wireless silence—operates for 1,000 men who for months have been carrying out one of the toughest assignments of the war.

Sentries of the sea, they belong to the Royal Canadian Air Force, and police the Atlantic from the international border to the ice-fields of the Far North. Often in incredible weather conditions they spend a whole day at sea, hundreds of miles from land.

No airman on convoy guard is permitted to touch a wireless key. Use of radio could give a submarine the bearings on a flotilla of ships. The airmen must be expert at the flashing of signals by lights.

So rigid is the rule that a plane forced down at sea, even out of sight of the convoy, must not ask aid by wireless. The axiom is: One aircraft and its crew are of less value to Britain than a ship or a convoy of foodstuffs or armaments.



Kumeras in Fiji perhaps, but on the way there it would be potatoes, and the cook's off-sider did the honours.

OFF TO FIJI Troops' Cheery Farewell

EACH time Empire ships have carried New Zealand youth, cheering and singing, to the dangers of war, the same thoughts have gone with them. It has been difficult to find anything new to say about each successive exodus. Each has meant so much, and yet it has been possible to say so little. But with a recent departure there was a new element.

When the troops left for Fiji their number was not so great nor the size of the transports so tremendous as they had been for the first echelons. But they were taking our men for duty in garrisons close to our own shores, and war cannot ever be far away from any country in a warring world when ships travel at 20 knots and aeroplanes at 300 miles an hour.

These men might have—no one knew or knows yet—a more directly important task in the defence of their country than those who had preceded them out of home harbours, and this more domestic aspect of their job lightened the parting. The crowd, although silent as such crowds are in the glare of a band and the blast of sirens, was cheerful. The men this time did not line the rails with faces eager for a last look at a country that would soon be left so very far

behind. There was more of the spirit of an incidental adventure about this departure.

The masters of the ships in harbour must have sensed the easier informality of the occasion. They could not resist the temptation to try and make this departure something more in the spirit of those occasions of 1914-18. One blew his siren. Another answered. Then another, and for five unrestrained minutes the harbour echoed to the tuneless boosting of the noise. And it all seemed more sane and ordinary when the Governor-General appeared and used a microphone.

There was far more hilarity. Clusters of relatives on the wharf got busy sending last presents aboard. Some were cunning. One old man, who had been doing the usual before he arrived, had two bulky, oblong parcels under his arm. The boys spotted him and they established a line of communication with a long piece of string. The parcels swayed dangerously against the iron plates of the ship's side, but all were hoisted safely. A battery of press photographers, watching operations, carefully screened them from the embarkation officer.

One enterprising lass, seeing that everyone was in good humour, enticed her sweetheart down to a handy port-hole, stretched on tip toe from a bollard, and enjoyed a protracted kiss. The crowd spotted this strategy and crowded round to cheer before they had finished.