

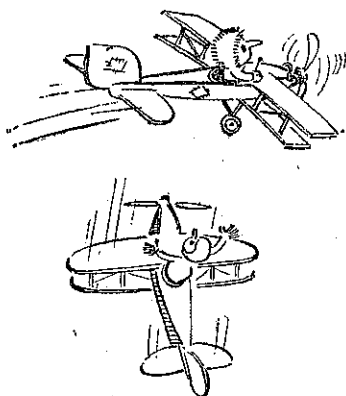
## SNIPPETS FROM TALKS

# Night-Flying an Arduous War Task

Heroism of Dangerous Actions Passes Unseen in Game Where Men Are Pawns Of Fortune — Australia, Divided And As A Whole, Seeks Her Own Solutions.

MR. A. R. KINGSFORD (3YA).

**NIGHT-FLYING** during the war was not as spectacular as day-flying. For instance, a dog-fight in daytime and the victor following the vanquished to earth might be witnessed by thousands, and any outstanding action on the part of any pilot would be noted, and often led to reward; but with the night pilot nobody witnessed his performance, and many heroic actions worthy of reward passed unseen. Few



pilots would put in a report after a raid in terms of self-praise, and so it was that this branch of the Air Force was not heard of very much, and did not receive in many cases well-deserved decorations or acknowledgment for services rendered. In daytime the pilot could see danger ahead, and his chances were equal; but with night-flying there were many hidden dangers. The greatest of these was a forced landing, often in enemy territory, without a light of any description to guide you, not knowing what was beneath to land on.

**NAVIGATION** at night in those days was another problem which faced the pilot, for there were no instruments such as the machines to-day possess. To guide us on our side of the lines we had lighthouses which signalled a letter continuously, but once over enemy territory it was a matter of skill with a large amount of good luck thrown in. Then again, the enemy had all sorts of traps which, owing to the darkness, he was able to set to the best advantage. The night bomber never knew what was ahead of him.

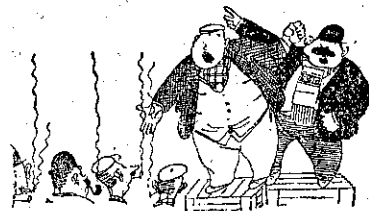
**ONE** of our machines is missing. . . . What a lot lies behind those six words! Can anyone realise the feelings of the two unfortunate men in that machine? Let me give you a description of a raid which actually took place. The weather was doubtful, and the night as dark and cold as it could be. Eighteen machines took part. Sharp at 6.15 p.m. the first machine took the air. After circling the aerodrome to gain height, we headed for the lines. Our target was roughly 40

minutes' flying from the line, which we crossed at 3000 feet. Everywhere was inky darkness. I peered over the side to try to distinguish something which might serve to assure us that we were on the right course, but the dense night gave no sign. Suddenly the monotony was broken. We forgot our discomfort—a searchlight had pierced the darkness and we were caught in its beam. Every part of the machine was visible; my observer was immediately on his feet, with machinegun ready for action. We dived down the beam and let go a burst from the machinegun, but it had no effect; the searchlight still held us; we side-slipped out of the beam, which was swung frantically to and fro across the heavens in an endeavour to pick us up again. As last he got us, and we again took a steep dive, and our gun spat. Our shots eventually got home. We picked up our course, and we were straining our eyes in the hope of finding our target when, to our right, a bomb exploded. By the colour of the flame we knew it was our leader's phosphorous bomb, and we could see it had started a fire. . . . With the exploding bombs, a furiously burning building, machine-gun fire from several directions, and anti-aircraft shells bursting above us, the whole presented a most spectacular sight, like a huge fireworks display. Having dropped all our bombs, our one thought was to get out of it, and so we took our homeward course. An hour later an examination of our plane revealed seven bullet holes in the wings.

MR. LEICESTER WEBB (3YA).

**AS** you are probably aware, it is not only in the matter of Government finance that the Australian constitution is being criticised. At a recent referendum the people of Western Australia voted in favour of secession from the Commonwealth; and at the moment a petition in favour of secession is being considered by the British Parliament. The cause of the trouble in Western Australia is that this State depends mainly for its prosperity on primary industries; and the primary industries have been hard hit by the tariff imposed by the Federal Government. In addition to the secession movement, you have the movement for the creation of new States, which is strongest in the Riverina district of New South Wales. The cause of the new States movement is the fact that a very large proportion of the population of Australia is concentrated in the large towns. I suppose that the proportion of urban dwellers in Australia is higher than in any other country in the world. The result is that in New South Wales, despite the device of the country quota, the policy of the State Government is very largely dominated by the needs and the wishes of the metropolis of Sydney. The farmers of the Riverina feel, and with

some justification, that their interests are neglected. They are therefore campaigning for the establishment of a new State in the Riverina. The agitation is a strong one, and the Government of New South Wales appointed a Royal Commission last year to consider the subject. The report was summarised in the cable news a short while ago. It expresses the opinion that the creation of new States is possible, but does not say that such a step would be desirable. The average business man



in Sydney or Melbourne is mainly concerned with the high cost of Government and with the obstacles to commerce presented by the existence of State boundaries. He feels that seven Parliaments and seven civil services are too heavy a burden for a nation of only six millions. The Westralian or the Tasmanian will assure you confidently that in the end the federation will be destroyed by economic maladjustments. The Riverina farmer will tell you that the remedy is the creation of more States. In the meantime the Federal Government is extending its powers, particularly on the financial side. Already through the Premiers' Conference and the Loan Council it has a substantial measure of control over the budgets of the States. I am inclined to think that ultimately the problem will be solved along these lines, and eventually the States will be reduced to the status of the provinces in South Africa. In other words, they will be glorified local bodies.

MR. W. J. HUNTER (3YA).

**IN** primitive communities there is often no regular system for the administration of justice. The principle of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" is in force, and if a person is wronged he and his kindred set out to right the wrong or obtain revenge against the aggressor and his kindred. England was not an exception to this general rule. English law is a product of native growth, not an importation. The laws of Scotland, Germany, France and most of the European states, of South American states and of parts of the British Commonwealth itself, are derived from Roman law. But the law of England, which we call Common Law, is native. It was never laid down in a code, but grew and developed with the growth of the country. We in New Zealand took the Common Law from England and so did the United States of America.