

B3.

Motto — "Wings for the Lion."

2nd Prize

The Development of Air Transport as an Imperial Link

A New World is on the horizon. The British Empire, along with many other nations both great and small, is emerging from a ghastly war. The peoples of the British Empire have experienced great hardship and suffering during this huge war. As this pen passes over this paper, many thousands have been released from captivity, or the threat of captivity, in Northern and Eastern Africa. Meanwhile thousands more are held down under the heel of a conqueror in Malaya, Burma, Hong Kong, the Channel Islands and at many other points on the World's surface. Other peoples of the Empire are being bombed from the air from Portsmouth to Port Darwin, from Malta to Madras and at other places too numerous to mention. But Great Britain and her Dominions are thinking in terms of offensive action and everyone is sure of the result. The Peace that the British people require is a happy and a prosperous one. Many people have dreams of the future, and it is up to the British Empire to see that those dreams come true. Scientists of the British Empire, who have already done much for the World, must deal with the

practical problems that will arise. Everyone has vivid imaginations of two things; namely television and air transport. Science is dealing with these problems and now we can expect much from it. Air Transport may be a vital factor concerning the British Empire in the future! As for Television, this may be a luxury and that is about all.

Great progress has already been made in linking up the Empire by air-routes, as well of sea-routes. Without giving any specified air-routes, (these can be obtained from any tourist agency) it can be stated that a great deal of the Empire is covered by the wings of British Air companies. But owing to a natural tendency, the British people have not been very tentative in dealing with aeronautical problems. Our eyes turned to the United States in amazement to see the new big transport aircraft that are flying over there. While U.S. planes were large, ours were smaller though perhaps faster. We can all remember the air races to Cape Town and Port Darwin. Such names as Tommy Rose, Amy Mollison and Scott and Black still remain in our memories. Progress has certainly been made. Therefore much more can be expected.

How has this progress affected the Empire? It has helped the Dominions to a great extent. Their ministers, both in War and Peace, have been able to reach the Home Country within a few hours of their departure. Finance men, colonial administrators and others have been able to travel to various parts of the Empire carrying with them vital papers, plans and other paraphernalia which seem to be necessary for civil administration and business. But, to a small extent, the "small man" has been affected by this new means of transport. The most outstanding example of this is the Air-Mail. The cost of sending mail by air overseas is heavy, as the writer has experienced with a pen-friend in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The signs indicate however that after this War is over and things become normal again, the cost will go down. To travel by air has been little more than a dream to the "Man-in-the-Street." But here it should be emphasized that the average British man, with so many million other people speaking the same language and living approximately the same way as himself,

should have the opportunity of travelling by air at a price within his means, to those other millions of people. Such names as Australia, Canada, and India mean little more than far-off lands that are beyond the reach of the average Britisher, to many people. True, Australia is a long way away and the sea journey would take a few weeks, but the aeroplane could narrow that distance and take a matter of days over the journey.

There has been a blessing in disguise that has helped considerably towards the realisation of the dreams stated above. That has been the War. Many people have stated that the present War is one of movement. The aeroplane has helped a great deal towards making this war a war of movement. We have read in the newspapers during the past three and a half years of masses of air-borne troops being transported to Poland, Holland, Belgium, France, the Balkans, Crete, Norway and Russia by the Nazis. We ourselves have used aircraft to take troops to North Africa. All these

facts go to show that the aeroplane is almost as much a means of transport as the ship, railway-train or motor-truck. Important war conferences have been held in various parts of the World and often those people concerned have travelled by air. Examples of this are Basablanca, Cairo, Moscow, Washington, the Bermudas and Ottawa. It will be noticed that in all but two of the places named, English is the official language. Yes, it can be stated that this war has been a blessing to air transport, though the disguise has been brutal.

The critic might ask, "What exactly can the aeroplane do in the way of range, speed and capacity?" "Can an aeroplane carry passengers to Melbourne?" and "How many passengers could be carried?" These questions can best be answered by facts. Mr. Churchill travelled 30,000 miles in his American built "Liberator" in his recent journeys that took him to Basablanca, Cairo, Tripoli, Adana and Cyprus. This shows the endurance of a modern 4-motored aeroplane. But the "Liberator" is not the best of transports, though officially it can carry a two-ton load for a

distance of over 3,000 miles! The distance to Eastern Canada is about the same. The cruising speed of a "Liberator" is anything between 200 and 250 miles per hour, while its top speed is 280 miles per hour! Recently the news came from California that the new four-motored air-transport Consolidated "Constellation" can fly at 350 miles per hour at twenty-thousand feet. Pictures of this aircraft show that its fuselage is circular in cross-section, so giving a maximum amount of space inside. The number of passengers that can be carried is given by this fact. The United States built air transport Douglas DC-3 "officially" carries 21 passengers. One of these machines carrying refugees out of Burma managed to accommodate about 60 people, for safety in India. On arriving in India it was found that 72 persons were transported, 12 others having squeezed into the mail-compartment near the tail of the plane!! Of course this does not mean that passengers should be like sardines, but it shows what a turn-motored aeroplane can do. It shows also that aerodromes exist in Burma and India—places that are not generally supposed to be so advanced as to have aerodromes.

Much has been said about the aircraft. The next question is concerning air-bases. A little has already been said on this matter. Already Canada, India, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa possess military Air Forces under their own control. While in the Royal Air Force itself we find men bearing identification tapes on their shoulders with the words, "Rhodesia" and "Kenya". Surely if the men of the Empire can fly in war, they can fly in peace? Therefore each part of the Empire whether Dominion or Colony would have the men; the men who are willing to fly. These men would soon see that air-bases were built. So once air-bases were built, they would soon be used wherever they existed, in the jungle or on the desert they would not be left in neglect. If there is any doubt of this, does a housewife leave her house uncleaned, to be covered in dust and to become filled with bugs? Does a sailor, who is so proud of his ship, put her into a port full of rats? No, of course not, and therefore the airman would look after his home or port, whatever you like to call it.

Theoretically the Empire has, or will have

the aeroplanes, the bases and the men to manage the bases. The next stunning question is Money. Looking at the poverty of the West Indies, things are not hopeful! The question is:— "Can the Dominions and Colonies raise enough money to build up air-lines?"

"If so, are the people, the people who have deprived themselves so that this war may be concluded successfully, going to be willing to raise this money?" With the help of the Home Government, the money could be raised. For, after this War is over, the civil population will not be allowed to slack off into an unhealthy peace as in 1919. When the government talks of rebuilding the West Indies and such places it must introduce air-travel as something vital to those places. Just in the same way that the West Indies are to have better schools, better health services, they must have better means of transport. In other words Air Transport must fall in as part of the "After-the-War" scheme. The Peace will not come to the Empire on a silver plate, but it will only be gained by hard work and the sacrifice of money.

Let us suppose for a moment that we have jumped ahead to the year 1955. The part of the "Trans-Empire Air Line Company's" routes has been opened. Now it is possible to travel almost anywhere between Vancouver and Sydney, and Glasgow and Hong Kong. The question is:—"Are things working according to plan?" All that can be said now (i.e. in 1943) is that they should be, and that if the British people have steady minds and do not become slack, they certainly will.

One thing has been forgotten. At the moment the British Empire is confined to the Earth, just one planet. The T.E.A.L. Company (mentioned above) may have rocket planes in its service! This staggering fact is now not so ridiculous as it may seem. But only one mind in a hundred thousand knows anything of this matter.

Once again we will take a trip forward into the Future; the year is 1955 again. Mr. Smith, a hard-working man of the City, is about to take a fortnight's holiday. He reviews the time-table at the local air-port, and after making several suggestions to his family, he arranges

a journey to the Bermuda Isles. The journey will cost quite a bit, in fact Mr. Smith has been saving up spare money for the past few weeks. Seven days later the same group of people assemble at the offices of the air-port. Mr. Smith is dressed in light summer clothes similar to his wife and two children, who are excited. From out of the hangar, rolls a large, sleek, four-motored air transport. Swarms of mechanics are now putting the last touches to the motors, wings and tailplane. Everything is now "ship-shape," and half-a-dozen smartly dressed stewards climb into the cabin and saloons. Then, one-by-one, the passengers enter the beautiful plane. Within twenty minutes four motors are beating rhythmically and soon the aircraft is air-borne — to the Bermuda's.

This last scene demonstrates what can be achieved. What impression will Air Transport make on the British Empire? The Empire, closely bound together, will be stronger. Its peoples will be more educated, through more extensive travel amongst its neighbours. The development of Air Transport will be one

of the boldest steps forward ever taken for
the sake of our glorious Commonwealth -
the British Empire.

Wings for the Lion