

NEWS AND VIEWS

The Democracies and Honour

By means of the radio, Mr. Winston Churchill and General Smuts, who will surely go down in history as two of the leading statesmen of these days, recently gave addresses which will mark, possibly the close of a stage, possibly the opening of a new period of activity, in the progress of the War. Mr. Churchill gave a careful and moderately worded survey of the present position in the Balkans, North Africa and the Atlantic. He did not minimize the difficulties of the situation, but he made it quite clear that we could not have done otherwise than we did in answering the call of Greece; to have left Greece to her fate "would be fatal to the honour of the British Empire, without which we could neither hope nor deserve to win this hard war". It is by actions such as this, and by our bearing under the pitiless rain of blows aimed at our cities and our merchant ships as well as at our armed forces, that we have gained the admiration and support of the people of the United States, and in spite of all the arguments about American interests and safety being threatened by Nazi doctrines, "the action of the United States will be dictated not by methodical calculations of profit and loss, but by moral sentiments and that gleaming flash of resolve which lifts the hearts of men and nations, and springs from the spiritual foundations of human life itself".

By the honourable discharge of our obligations to the utmost of our available power, we have encouraged the peoples of the Balkans, and others as well, to believe in the good faith of the democracies. Whereas the Germans, Mr. Churchill said, have made "a river of blood and hate between themselves and the Greek and Yugoslav peoples", the British Empire has won admiration and sympathy. As General Smuts put it: "Great Britain has been investing in friendships, as Germany has been investing in hatreds in the process of war, and Great Britain has thus been building up the moral capital with which the real new order will be floated after the peace". Both speakers urged the need for a just appreciation of the significance of events in the Mediterranean area, but stressed that the vital theatre of war is in the West, in Britain and on the Atlantic, where the recent extension of the American neutrality patrol has given us most valuable assistance.

Aircraft Production

SPEAKING in the House of Lords, in reply to a request from Lord Sempill, Lord Beaverbrook recently disclosed several facts of technical interest with regard to R.A.F. equipment. One significant

statement was that the Napier 'Sabre' engine has proved successful and is in production, both in Great Britain and the United States. This engine was put into production without going through the usual period of testing—a procedure contrary to all normal peace-time practice. It was designed by Major Halford, and develops a horse-power of 2,400. It is at present being fitted to the Hawker-Siddeley 'Typhoon', a new fighter capable of a speed of more than four hundred miles an hour, with a greater range than any previous single-seater type. Aircraft from the United States, including the new 'Catalina B.P.Y.' flying boat, the Curtiss 'Tomahawk', the Boeing 'Flying Fortress' and entirely Canadian built 'Hurricane' are now being received in quantities, nearly a thousand to date, and the air ferry system, by which many are delivered by air across the Atlantic, will soon be extended so that fighters as well as bombers may be sent in this way. Such journeys have been made in 7½ hours, coast to coast, compared with 20 hours, the schedule time for the American Clipper to Lisbon. The fact was disclosed that the only aircraft that has been lost during this service was unfortunately one that was carrying Sir Frederick Banting as a passenger (see p. 535 of this issue).

The development of a new high explosive bomb is proceeding successfully, and recently Squadron Leader Garner, one of the officers responsible for the technical side of this work, flew over the town of Ernden with the "greatest bomb that has ever been dropped from an aeroplane", observing the effects for himself. The supply of raw materials, and equipment such as guns, navigation instruments, radio apparatus, etc., has given anxiety, but is improving. Most aircraft and aero-engine manufacturers have agreed that their demands for materials are now being satisfied, but it is admitted that a certain equipment shortage still exists. The dispersal of production centres, as an antidote to enemy bombing, is claimed to be a success. One plant, until recently on a single site, is now dispersed to forty-two centres in five different counties, and at the same time duplicate production of each item has been arranged so that the loss of any one plant cannot entirely hold up production of a unit.

Scientific Liaison with America

In a written reply to a Parliamentary question on April 29, Mr. Butler, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, said: "After consultation with the appropriate authorities in the United States, His Majesty's Government have drawn up a comprehensive scheme, which has already been put into operation, for co-operation in scientific matters with the United