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NAVAL AIR ARM AND R.A.F.

Times, 1.12.36.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—Your correspondents, including Lord Trenchard, have dealt with the position as it exists to-day and not with its inevitable development.

Seaplanes are steadily becoming larger and more seaworthy. In a few years seaplane squadrons, with their parent ships, will cruise afloat, ready to take off and operate in the air as required. They will be an integral part of the Fleet, undertaking many of the duties of light cruisers and destroyers. Their navigation, pilotage, station keeping, signalling, and operations will be entirely naval, and one can see no possible argument for the Air Force having any voice in their control.

It should be realized that with the increasing range and carrying capacity of aircraft their problems are becoming more and more those with which the Navy has always had to deal, and a stronger case can be made out for the Air Force, other than Army cooperation squadrons, being absorbed into the Navy than that naval aircraft should be in any way under the control of the Air Ministry.

Another important side of naval air operations which has been ignored by your correspondents is anti-submarine and convoy escort work. During 1918 we had air stations around the British coasts in direct telephonic communication with the Air Division, Admiralty, whence I controlled their operations. Constant and immediate touch had to be kept with the Anti-Submarine, Naval Intelligence, Convoy, and other Divisions at the Admiralty, and Admiral Sir William Fisher, who was then Director of the Anti-Submarine Division, will endorse my opinion that the introduction of another Ministry would have rendered it impossible to obtain the cooperation of surface and aircraft in the time at our disposal. We shall have even less time in a future war.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

L. H. STRAIN.

Dunure House, Ayrshire.