

A.R.P. TO-DAY

WHAT THE WORKS ARE DOING

II.—THE ACTIVE NORTH

This second article on Air Raid Precautions describes progress in Midland and Northern factories.

From Our Special Correspondent

It is once admitted that high explosive is the danger in air attack the central problem of A.R.P. becomes that of evacuation, either into the country or into the shelter and trench. For defence against high explosive is not possible for more than a part of the population. A suggestion has been made that the expenditure of £100,000,000 on underground shelter would refer to us our position as an island Power. But it is rightly emphasized in the Anderson Report that passive defence is no substitute for active defence.

It cannot be the premise of any argument that guns, fighter aircraft, balloon barrages, and weather offer no protection at all. Mass sheltering, like mass evacuation, with their interruption of vital industries and communications, would achieve half the enemy's objective before he arrived. Not only A.R.P. volunteers but certain sections of our industrial population cannot be spared from vulnerable areas. It is not clear whether it is accurately known which those sections are. A system of registration may make such knowledge possible.

INDUSTRIAL DEFENCE

Too much can be made of evacuation as a form of protection. Where the danger is great school children and old people must be moved. There is also a case for evacuating women and non-essential workers from vulnerable industrial areas either into the country or into less vulnerable parts of the same areas, for example, the great dock areas or the East End of London. If vital workers cannot be moved and are expected to live, with their wives, near their work they are surely entitled to protection both at home and in the factory. The scheme for defence batteries in vital industrial centres may draw attention to the probability that the factory will come into the first line of defence.

With the information gained in the crisis and in the Anderson Report it should be possible soon to perfect plans for the removal of school children. The help of some of the very rate and efficient rural A.R.P. organizations might be enlisted for billeting and reception. But it must be asked again whether billeting is the right solution for the children, good though it may be for adults. Are we not missing a golden opportunity of combining social progress with defence preparation if we shelve the idea of the permanent country school camp? Such camps might be mistaken for military objectives, but there are surely districts free of such a danger. Billeting of children presents serious problems of health, education

A.R.P. TO-DAY

A SURVEY OF WORK BEGUN

I.—THE SYMBOL OF THE GAS MASK

The following is the first of two articles on the problems of Air Raid Precautions by a writer who in the course of his inquiries has travelled 1,200 miles and visited many cities and towns in the Midlands and North, as well as nine representative factories.

From Our Special Correspondent

It is fair to say that A.R.P. policy is now catching up with public opinion. Decisions about evacuation policy have been forced on Ministers; Sir John Anderson has been given the task of organizing civilian man power; the Board of Education is abandoning its detached view of the problem of passive defence in schools, and authorities have at last the assurance that trenches for a tenth of their needs will be paid for. But even now, after the shocks and extemporization of the September crisis, the main lines of future policy do not spring to the eye.

A prominent official stated not long ago that A.R.P. was a comparatively simple matter. One may doubt if a single local authority could agree with him. Experts reckon that there are at least 20 aspects to be considered in the planning of passive defence against air raids. A rough division would group them as follows: Recruitment and training of personnel; rescue and medical services; shelter and evacuation. For three years these essentials have been grouped by the Home Office in that order, whereas the public have long felt that the last should come first. Now that the recruiting problem is almost solved and training of half a million people in full swing, there can be no reason for delay in approaching the other two aspects in a comprehensive and business-like way. Evacuation policy should and could have been determined without waiting four months for the publication of the Anderson Report. The unfinished trenches in the London parks are a shabby and depressing reminder.

SCAPEGOATS IN WHITEHALL

It has been forgotten, in the hubbub of recrimination which the September emergency left behind it, that the official precautions effort is still only 10 months old. Most authorities, consciously or not, have been working on a four-year programme without a clear time-limit. Home Office handbooks published in 1936 could not foresee events abroad. And until about a year ago public opinion and local bodies were loth to be hurried. When your Correspondent visited over 20 of our large towns in August it was unusual to come across a real sense of urgency, save in some factories. Yet there was no good reason why local authorities of vulnerable areas should not have gone a long way with their planning before the financial question was settled at the beginning of this year. The few that did are practically ready. The delay, has meant that the Home Office has been compelled

CIVIL AIR GUARD PROGRESS

CLUB LIABILITIES

PROVISION OF WORKING CAPITAL

From Our Aeronautical Correspondent

More than 30,000 applications for membership of the Civil Air Guard had been received before the lists were temporarily closed. There were about 200 training aircraft in the approved flying clubs at that time available for members of the Civil Air Guard. Fully used, they might train 8,000 pupils up to the "A" licence standard in the course of a year. About half that number has already come under training, and it is likely that 10,000 pilots will have been turned out by the end of the first year.

Rather more than 60 clubs are engaged in the work. Before they can raise the training rate they must obtain more aircraft and more instructors. The requisite training aeroplanes are expected to be ready in the spring. It is thought that not more than 100 will be needed. Some of these will go to swell the fleets of clubs already training Civil Air Guard pupils; some will be acquired by new clubs, as they come to be approved under the scheme from time to time. Assuming that a total of 300 training aircraft is devoted to the work there should be no difficulty in completing a strength of 10,000 pilots by the end of the summer.

Some of the clubs have already placed orders for new aircraft. Others would like to place orders. For the most part, the clubs are happy and comfortable in their working of the scheme, but with the expansion of their activities which must take place in the spring some financial anxiety will occur unless steps can be taken to provide a little working capital. Payments to the clubs for the training work they do are made a month in arrear. They receive regular payments in this way for the training given to pupils up to six hours. For the next payments after that they have to wait until the pupils take their "A" licences.

NEW AIRCRAFT

While the weather and the lack of daylight restrict the volume of work which can be done the expenditure of the clubs on petrol, oil, aircraft maintenance, and wages is relatively small. When the work expands, liabilities in this respect will become heavier and, at the same time, the clubs will have to pay for the new machines they acquire. The raising of money to finance the working of a flying club is not easy, especially when the club is engaged largely in work on behalf of the Government. The club member, who is willing to lend money for the benefit of himself and his fellows, is less ready to finance the training of those who learn cheaply and tend to overcrowd the aerodrome.

It would seem that some means must be devised by the Air Ministry to make available to the clubs sums of money on account of the work each is likely to do, so that running costs may be met without recourse to embarrassing financial devices. Subject to the meeting of this point and to the tacit limitation of the number of pupils to be trained each year, the Civil Air Guard scheme promises to work smoothly and well and