

R.A.F. Bids High for Bright Young Men With Scientific Bent

FOR YOUNG MEN who have ambitions to be in at the start of the vast developments foreshadowed by the introduction of guided missiles, there is no more certain way than a niche in one of the highly-skilled radio engineering trades of the Royal Air Force.

But there is keen competition today for the bright young men with a scientific turn of mind. As one of the most important contributions towards finding recruits of the calibre it so urgently needs, the R.A.F. has an Apprentices' Training Scheme which for the radio trades is at No. 1 Radio School, Locking, Somerset. Pleasantly sited at the foot of the Mendip Hills, and with Weston-super-Mare on the doorstep, it combines the best of seaside and country.

Learning that among the 770 apprentices now training there were over a dozen young men from Norwich and Norfolk an "Eastern Daily Press" reporter and photographer accepted the R.A.F.'s invitation to visit the Station and see them at work. So it was that having left Bramham St. Faith after

breakfast one dull chilly morning we were landed in bright sunshine on the civil airport at Weston before ten.

The Officer Commanding No. 1 Radio School is Group-Captain D. N. K. Blair-Oliphant but in charge of the Apprentices' Wing is W/Commander S. Linnard, who received us in his office, its walls covered with charts showing the progress of each entry. There are three a year

Selection Board

A boy may enter Locking any time between the ages of 15 and 17½ by passing a qualifying examination and a selection board. Once accepted he is in for a busy but interesting time judging by what we saw. Grammar or technical school education is not a necessity given mathematical ability. Half the boys come from secondary modern schools, but the Wing-Commander emphasised the value of the extra year or two at school after normal leaving age.

Conditions at Locking reflect the demand for the service of young people with scientific bent which has put the Armed Forces in sharp competition with industrial and other employers. They would have to offer very high wages and extraordinary holidays to do better.

In return for his acceptance of Service training and discipline the aircraft apprentice receives a comprehensive technical and academic education which costs the country between £4000 and £5000. He has opportunity to pursue almost any sport and is well-housed, clothed and fed—for extra rations are provided for the growing boy.

And all the time he receives a regular wage. At 17½ the pay is almost doubled and the apprentice with £6 2s. 6d. coming in, jumps straight into the Income Tax bracket. If he passes out successfully in the rank of junior technician he will earn 25s. 6d. a day, or 28s. 6d. if promoted to corporal. That rank is usually attained within a few months and thereafter diverse avenues are open to the top grades of Warrant Officer or Master Technician which command 40s. 6d. a day.

Ban on Drinks

As W/Commander Linnard discussed the advantages Locking offers, it was not difficult to imagine that it was a headmaster speaking. In some ways his position is analogous for as he pointed out the Service is in loco parentis to these boys.

It means that Locking can and does ban alcoholic drinks, motor cycles or any other motor vehicle. There are compulsory savings from pay. All this is for the apprentices' own benefit and with the co-operation of parents who are invited to visit the school and discuss their boys' future.

Exceptional Apprentices—three a year—are recommended for cadetships at the R.A.F. College, Cranwell, or the Royal Air Technical College, Henlow. A boy keen on flying may volunteer for flying duty on completing his course at Locking and subject to passing the air crew initial training school would be granted a probationary commission. There are opportunities for flying at Locking and it is intended that all apprentices should get 16 hours' flying in future.

Among the Norfolk boys we met, the two senior were D. G. Buxton, of 8,

Brief Parish Meeting at Coltishall

Coltishall's annual parish meeting, held in the School, was over in about 15 minutes. Mr C. J. Morse, chairman of the Parish Council, presided.

The Clerk, Mr. P. J. Devlin, read a letter from the Eastern Counties Bus Co. stating that it was now proposed to cut out altogether their No. 70 service running through Coltishall from Aylsham to Wroxham except on Fridays, when there would be six buses running from Aylsham and five returning there.

Louis Close, Old Catton, and A. J. Rafferty, of Pine Tree House, South Wootton. Nineteen years old, they hope to pass out in July. Buxton, who has gained promotion to corporal apprentice rank, aspires to be a ground wireless fitter and Rafferty a ground radar fitter. Buxton is an old boy of Norwich School and Rafferty was at King Edward VII School, King's Lynn.

Service Abroad

Keen to learn flying is P. A. Cason, an old boy of Hamond's Grammar School, Swaffham, who is training for air radio fitter. This entails servicing equipment in flight and he has already done 18 hours in the air. His home is at Necton and he hopes to serve abroad.

This should not be difficult, for we met a young ex-Locking N.C.O. who was back as a sergeant-instructor after three years in which he had been to Australia, Singapore and Christmas Island.

Another future air radio fitter from Norfolk is C. R. Armes, of Furze Road, Thorpe. While his home was at West Earlham he attended Henderson School, going on to the City College. His father is in the R.A.F.

R. P. Gaglione, of R.A.F. Marham, is another. He attended Downham Market Grammar School and at 16 has had the distinction of boxing for the Wing.

Lunch Choice

When we looked in at the apprentices' mess there was a party of Norfolk men sitting down to lunch. They included a trio of Old Pastonians, R. W. Borrett of Stalham, R. J. Slipper of Mundesley, and D. M. Harmer of Swafield, and J. R. Gibson of Rushford who was at Thetford Grammar School like D. E. Allison of Newton, Thetford. Others we met were D. W. Graver of Litcham who attended the County Technical College, King's Lynn, and B. J. Colby of Gentry Road, Norwich, who was at the City College.

The menu offered a choice of fried cod fillet, with chips, garden peas and sliced carrots, braised steaks, or roast beef with vegetables; and mock mince tart and custard or rice pudding to follow.

Sporting facilities at Locking are as varied as those at public schools. The two football codes are played as well as cricket, hockey, tennis, badminton, swimming, basket ball, athletics and fencing.

Hobbies

The Locking Society to which the apprentices belong for a modest fee of 1s. a term enables all kinds of spare-time hobbies to be pursued.

A peep into the society's headquarters showed evidence of a flourishing model aircraft club, a printing guild, camera club and an amateur radio society. We heard that a recently-formed angling club is going strong, while a sailing club which uses a nearby reservoir has 50 members. Its boats include a Firefly, two Nationals and a Cadet.

And amid all the uncertainties of the future the graduates of Locking have an advantage expressed by a spokesman in the simple phrase: "Whatever happens there will be no redundancy for these chaps."

'THE GIOCONDA SMILE' AT YARMOUTH

One of the finest features of the writings of Aldous Huxley is his ability, while evolving an intricate but clearly discernible plot, to put forward his strong point of view on modern man and the modern world.

"The Gioconda Smile" is a play which embodies these characteristics and thus, besides entertaining, it provides food for the thoughts of the audience. This week at Yarmouth's Little Theatre, the Norfolk Repertory Company contrive to bring out both the facets of this brilliant work.

It falls to producer Anthony Cundell in the big part of Henry, the rich idealist, whose infidelity to his dying wife brings calamitous results, to provide much of the play's metaphysical attitude, and this he does expertly, besides portraying the agonies of a condemned man.

Irene Inescort is extremely moving as the friend of Henry; as she puts it, "A violin string being screwed tighter and tighter." Neil Seiler provides a human understanding link as the doctor, and Carol Taylor makes a success of her part as Henry's young wife, unable to accept the facts.

Light relief comes from the crippled but fiery general of Mark Hammersley and at times from Joy Levy as the anti-male nurse (one of her best performances since joining the company). Anne Poole, Lorna Green, who deserves special mention for the striking settings she designs, and John Spradbery, complete the cast.

To do justice to this dramatic masterpiece would require unlimited space but suffice it to say that this is one of the finest plays seen at the Little Theatre for a long time.

J. R. K.

Unemployment Down in North Norfolk

Unemployment figures in the Cromer, Sheringham and Holt district for March show a slight downward trend compared with those for February.

The March figures, with February details in parentheses, are as follows: Cromer and Sheringham district, men 222 (226), women 43 (52); Holt district, men 106 (128), women 23 (29). The March figures last year were: Cromer and Sheringham district, men 196, women 47; Holt district, men 114, women 24.

AYLSHAM OLD PEOPLE TO HAVE OWN CLUBROOM

Ten years ago the first old people's club in Norfolk was opened at Aylsham by Mr. Clifford King (chairman of the Norfolk Old People's Welfare Committee). Now, after much work by a local committee and through the generosity of many townspeople, the Friendship Club has its own clubroom.

Once again, it is the first in the county and again Mr. King will formally open the new premises. This will be on April 9th, and arrangements were discussed at the half-yearly business meeting of the Aylsham Old People's Welfare Committee held at the clubroom on Monday. Mr. R. G. Faircloth (chairman) presided.

Stock Exchange: GENERALLY DULL

LONDON, Wednesday.

There was little change in general conditions in stock markets at the start of the new account and most sections closed with fresh losses. Gilt-Edged securities fell back in the morning but took a turn for the better later to close well above the worst levels. Early falls which had extended to about 3-16 were reduced to 1-16 or eliminated altogether. Nothing of interest developed in foreign bonds or rails but dollar stocks were marked down in sympathy with New York overnight.

Falls predominated in the industrial market, although there were a number of firm spots. Stores shares recovered from a dull start, but most other industrial groups lost ground. Gold shares made a quiet showing and the small movements were mixed. Diamond shares inclined easier, Coppers fell back and oils receded again to close with losses extending to over 2s. Rubbers and teas were undecided.

Bright spots in industrials included Beechams, which advanced 2s. 10½d. to 32s. 6d., Currys 2s. 9d. to 39s., Skefco 2s. to 39s. 6d. and British Aluminium 3d. to 45s. 4½d. By contrast, George Angus receded 9d. to 20s. 9d., while Baker Per-

kins, Grafton Warehouses and Telephones & General Trust were easier.

Crosse & Blackwell and Apin & Barrett recorded little change. A. B. Hennings jumped 1s. to 9s. 6d. bid on takeover talk. Engineering and steel shares lost further ground although falls were limited to a few pence. Electricals fell back. Scattered falls were recorded in radio shares. Losses of 3d. to 6d. were sustained by motor and aircraft shares although Jaguars were firm again whilst most shipping shares were easier, where changed.

Building issues resisted the trend, but small declines predominated in a quiet textile group. In stores shares Gussies A finished 7½d. up at 37s. 7½d. Breweries were inclined rather easier and there were numerous losses of 3d. to 9d. at the close. Tobaccos eased slightly in the afternoon. Paper and newspaper shares were featureless. Leading miscellaneous issues were less. Leading miscellaneous issues were easier where changed, while small falls predominated in other miscellaneous stocks. Banks and insurances were dull.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

The feature of the London foreign exchange market was the steady advance in sterling against the U.S. dollar to a higher level than that existing just before last week's Bank rate reduction. The Canadian dollar moved in the opposite direction.

TV CRAZE ONLY TEMPORARY: MR. F. H. EASTON

Mr. F. H. Easton, prospective Conservative and Liberal candidate for North Norfolk, speaking at the annual meeting of the Cromer Conservative Club said the club was suffering from conditions which were affecting other similar forms of activity—television.

There was, he said, a little less money to go round and many people were now buying and watching television. "I am of the opinion that, like every other craze, this is a temporary one and I think you will find that people will get over it when the novelty wears off. I am convinced that a man needs a certain amount of leisure and contact with his fellow men and clubs like this are better than the ordinary pub and fulfil useful purposes in that way."

Mr. Easton said the cost of living had now become static and having reached that state one now expected a drop. He was sure this would occur as the price of such things as rubber and copper which affected many day to day things which indirectly made up the weekly budget were showing a movement in that direction.

The Budget

Mentioning the forthcoming Budget, Mr. Easton said it was dangerous to make a prophecy, but he held out no hope of anything off beer and tobacco. He thought reductions would be made in such things as purchase tax.

Mr. E. G. Dee, secretary, said the year had been disappointing. Bar takings were down by about £200 and they had had to meet repairs and renewals costing about £160. This latter figure accounted for most of the year's loss on the profit and loss account. The statement of accounts showed income totalling £3737.

The officers elected were: President, Sir Thomas Cook; chairman, Mr. G. Roper; secretary, Mr. Dee; treasurer, Mr. L. G. Golland.

AYLSHAM RALLY

Representatives of many churches in the Cawston (Wesleyan Reform) Circuit will hold an Aylsham Tabernacle Church on Monday at the circuit's annual rally. Mr. G. Read, of Smallburgh (circuit president) presided and the speakers were the Rev. F. C. Wilson, of High Wymondley, and the Rev. A. Halliday, of Sheffield (general secretary of the Wesleyan Reform Union).