CONFUSING METHODS

Last night, in the unconventional form of a broadcast, the German Government made, or recorded as having already been made, certain proposals for the settlement of the dispute with Poland (which they themselves raised) over Danzig and the Corridor. It is, of course, quite impossible to consider in their form the merits of individual items in the programme of thirteen Points which are said to make up the plan of the Reich Government. According to the German broadcaster the proposals awaited the arrival of a Polish plenipotentiary in Berlin and, two days having elapsed, must now be regarded as having been rejected. The German statement does not correspond with such facts as are known to the British Government. The position must be cleared up, and a little time may be necessary in which to do it. Naturally it is for Poland, first and foremost to decide whether she can negotiate on any such basis as is suggested in the broadcast. It is Germany which has raised this quarrel with her in an acute and sudden form; and Great Britain and France will not, and cannot abandon Poland, to whom they are pledged, if Poland still feels that her independence is threatened and that she must fight for it. Let there be no mistake about that. The war, if it comes, will be for Germany a war on two fronts in the West as well as in the East.

There have been certain indications lately that the German people have at last been beginning to realize the peril for which their masters were heading. Not all the rumours of what has been happening inside Germany need be believed, but within the last twenty-four hours there has been at least one important change in the government of the country which is admirably designed to meet an emergency. It is difficult at present to assess precisely the significance of the new Defence Council. Herr HITLER's own concern, however, seems clearly to have been to allow his responsibility to be shared by a body of trusted associates, whose influence has always been great, but who have hitherto been answerable to himself personally rather than to the State or the people. Now the Defence Council has actually been given the right to take decisions without the participation of the FÜHRER. It would be unwise to jump at all the inferences which obviously suggest themselves; but the new dispensation is at least a remarkable departure from former practice in the German or any other dictatorship. The power of FIELD-MARSHAL GÖRING, as the Chairman of the Council, is greatly increased; and it is noticeable that he has nothing but permanent colleagues HERR FUNK, the Minister of Economics, and HERR VON RIBBENTROP, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, has not been included. Here again a word may be assumed that HERR VON RIBBENTROP has ceased to be important, and every thing is needed to be assumed that there is no more work for GOEBBELS or HIMMLER because they too are omitted from the list of Councillors. But these three have always been among the most confidential advisers of the FÜHRER, and if business was as usual in the Reich they might have been expected to be there.

FIELD-MARSHAL GÖRING is himself responsible for the direction of the Four-Year rearmament plan, and will have with him still HERR FUNK, whose close co-operation is of course essential, especially at this time when the crisis has produced great confusion in the internal trade of the country. HERR HITLER's past successes have been won by a ruthless disregard of economic and financial considerations whenever they conflicted with his political aims, and Germany is beginning to pay the price in scarcity of commodities, dislocation of services, and overwork of personnels. During this present crisis it is calculated that 2,000,000 men are serving under arms or in wholly unproductive work, and that about half of them have been withdrawn from industry or agriculture. Even in between the FÜHRER's requirement crews thousands of workmen were hastily taken out of industry to build the defensive fortifications on the West. There is now an extreme dearth both of labour and of the ordinary requirements of everyday life. Without necessarily crediting every story about scented sand being used as a substitute for paper or queues of housewives being broken up by storm-troopers, it is certain that for the whole of this week Germans have not been able to buy without written permission eggs, fats, sugar, tea, milk, cocoa, bread, flour, soap, leather, potatoes, coal, and textile materials; and meat is often in fact unobtainable. Before that petrol was rationed, and lately it has been exclusively available for military purposes. Transport for civilians is very especially reduced by train, in the air, or on the road. Even private cars have been requisitioned for the transport of reserve officers. The wireless announcers vainly explain to householders that these drastic measures are not caused by scarcity, but are necessary to guard Germany's economic rights and save her from a "hunger blockade" in the event of war. The bewildered public only knew that they were suffering all the privations of war before any war had been declared. And although war had not begun, and two million men were already mobilized, elderly reservists were being knocked up and summoned from their beds in the night to join the Colours. The Germans, who are an orderly race, might well ask themselves the meaning of all this feverish upheaval.

In this country all events preparations have been soberly and thoroughly made. Whatever may happen in Germany, there is nothing to do now but to complete and perfect them, to remain steady, and to be prepared for any emergency—either a swift conclusion with all our resources for a continuance for the present unstrained effort of normal peacetime. Amid general confusion

[illegible] Trade Union rate of 4/7 per cent. In the country as a whole fifty compared with a rate of 5.6.

The directors of the Provincial Assurance Company have decided to defer the payment of the annual dividend. (p. 16)

The premium rate for ship to load grain promptly to Argentina for the United Kingdom rose from 5s. to 15s. a ton yesterday, a rate of 10s. on the sailing recorded for 4 Great steamer. (p. 16)

A series of decisions affecting goods not discharged in the United Kingdom is announced by the announcement of the War Risks Cargo Pool. (p. 16)

Evacuation To-day

The Government's decision to set in motion today the scheme for the evacuation of school-children and others is not to be taken as a proof of pessimism. The official announcement boldly declares that "no one should conclude that war is regarded as inevitable," and that the start of evacuation is a "precautionary measure in view of the prolongation of the period of tension." The Government in fact have acceded to the request strongly made by the Labour Party in last Tuesday's debate, for the reason, no doubt, that it would be a serious responsibility to refuse at this moment to begin a step which must take several days to complete and must largely monopolize the means of transport while it continues. The proper view to take of it is that it is at any rate a rehearsal, such as many have suggested as less critical moments of a scheme which has required the most careful and prolonged organization but cannot be considered to be perfect so long as it remains without a general practical trial; and such a rehearsal will be all the better test because it occurs in the holiday season.

The French Government, whose country is as calm as our own, have already decided to take similar measures; the first batch of school-children left Paris on Wednesday, and the evacuation of the cities was smoothly completed yesterday. The British scheme, because of the greater density of the population, affects much larger numbers. Taking into account categories other than schoolchildren, about 3,000,000 people will leave their homes, including over 1,500,000 children. The transport of such large numbers means that those unaffected should cooperate by refraining, so far as possible, from using the railways, both overground and underground, and vehicles not used for national service should be kept off the roads. In particular no traffic entering London must use any of the nine routes which will be operated as from to-day as one-way routes in order to facilitate both official and unofficial evacuation, and the London Passenger Transport Board has advised the public that between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. its services, which will be severely curtailed, should be used only by those compelled to travel.

These next days will test the efficiency not merely of the evacuation areas but also of the receiving areas. For many months in country districts local committees have been busily arranging for the sudden increase in their population, and their voluntary work deserves the highest praise. They have had to arrange not only for accommodation but for feeding their guests, and a supply of food sufficient for forty-eight hours will be awaiting the evacuated. The emergency organization of hospitals, which for a long time lagged behind other plans, will also be tested to some extent, and some of the London hospitals will to-day transfer some of their patients to hospitals in outer areas. In short, there will be a large and widespread change in the normal life of the nation. The change, as Mr. HERBERT MORRISON declared yesterday, will be accepted in the calm, cheerful, and friendly spirit which has never flagged throughout the period of tension. The Government are fully justified in believing that their decision will cause no sort of flurry and encourage no silly rumour of the imminence of attack. For the decision is only a part of the policy of taking precautions, while still hoping and working for a time when they will be unnecessary.

The United Effort

Armament production in the engineering industry is taxing the available labour resources to the limit and has not reached its maximum. Large new factories have yet to be staffed, and the engineering employers and the Amalgamated Engineering Union have reached an understanding on how the additional industrial strength can be got. There is to be a "dilution" of skilled labour. Skilled men have a natural and, in ordinary times, a reasonable objection to the invasion of their ranks by others who have not had the same apprenticeship and reached the same degree of efficiency. To "dilution" the A.E.U. would oppose all its strength but for the national emergency. The national emergency overrules everything else, and one of the most treasured safeguards of the engineers' industrial standing is temporarily waived.

In the working arrangement, upon which agreement has been reached, are safeguards for the control of dilution and a strict engagement for reversion to the normal practice when the emergency conditions have passed. Local committees of the employers and the union will jointly determine at what time and to what extent less skilled men may be substituted for the thoroughly skilled. It is in the power of the engineers to make this contribution to national service, and they are loyally doing so. The discussions which have had this outcome were begun before the emergency reached the acuteness of the last few days, and they had reference to "peace-time emergency". In wartime still greater demands would be made on the man-power of the industry, and more drastic changes in existing practices would rapidly be necessary. The present fact is that the union of the skilled engineers is ready to concede the adjustments now required and so to make possible an increase of the country's preparation.

All-English Bread

At this time of year, when farmers are busy harvesting the wheat crop, a crop which may prove of more importance than usual in providing the nation, there must be many who wonder whether we are now growing types of wheat suited to modern methods of bread-making. It has often been said that the soft wheats grown in our climate will not produce the well-risen, open-textured, white loaf which the public have learned to expect from the bakery. That is true. The accepted standard in recent years has been set by the special qualities of Manitoba and other imported wheats, milled at the ports. Our forebears throve on an all-English loaf, but nowadays our bread is largely composed of imported grain, and much of the home wheat crop is used for feeding to

[illegible] British Flour Millers has been testing for breadmaking purposes several varieties of English wheat harvested in 1938. None of the wheats in this year's trials had baking qualities at all "comparable with those of average commercial "bakers' flour." Yeoman II, a variety bred at Cambridge, had the best all-round strength. But blended in the proportions of 40 per cent. to 60 per cent. with flour from high-grade Manitoba wheats, the baking character became "quite "satisfactory," and the difference between the English varieties in the blend was narrowed down to their capacity to absorb water. It has been said facetiously that the baker's job is to make water stand upright, and certainly the capacity of flour for water absorption is an important commercial consideration. English wheat, with its high moisture content, cannot be popular with millers and bakers on this count. Even so, wheat is a crop that is worth growing in this country, and it must be a matter of satisfaction to those responsible for maintaining the country's food supplies in wartime that the home wheat acreage has in the past six years been restored to its 1914 level. Let it be said, too, that the English farmer has achieved an average yield per acre which is the envy of most countries, and that the grain he produces has important uses, even if home-grown wheat alone will not, with modern baking technique make bread that suits the public fancy.

Shakespeare by Quantity

At this moment a type-writing contest is in progress at Ottawa between a team of Canadian and a team of American typists. The object is to see which team can type most swiftly, accurately, and neatly the whole works of SHAKESPEARE, plays, poems, and sonnets. In preparation for the contest, as our own Correspondent reported the other day, "a young "woman in Toronto has assigned the laborious "task of counting the total wordage of these "works." For "wordage" the Oxford English Dictionary refers the inquirer to "verbiage," and "verbiage" is defined as "wording of a "superabundant or superfluous character; abundance of words without necessity or without "much meaning." That is very much what some few people—austere Miltonians, most of them—think of the works of the Bard, and very much what KING GEORGE III was not afraid to say. But in the present case "wordage" must surely be taken in a later and purely quantitative sense, it means the number of words in SHAKESPEARE's works. And "a young woman "in Toronto" has counted them all. Just that. Her name is not mentioned; her size in shoes, favourite food, and views on relativity are concealed from us. There are known to be persons of odd statistical tastes who like to know how many times the word "of" occurs in the Book of Job, or how many i's there are in Worcestershire, and that sort of thing. But a young woman who knows for certain how many words there are in SHAKESPEARE is uniquely great. She has authority inferior only to that of the "young woman" who knows to a second what time it will be at the third stroke.

If she knows the wordage of SHAKESPEARE, she probably knows also his linage—not lineage, but the "quantity of printed matter estimated "in number of lines." If she knows that, she is indeed a marvel. It is a subject over which expert Shakespearians have disagreed so widely that no two editions count the lines alike unless they take their figures from the same source. And half a glance at DR. MCKNIGHT's "Phlegimenna for the Oxford Shakespeare" will show that this is a matter of great concern to the typists. Some of SHAKESPEARE is printed as prose when it might be verse, some as verse when it might be prose, some single lines are printed as two, and there are all sorts of traps in names of characters, stage directions, and so forth. At the end of every line the paper has to be shot back, and in typing the whole of SHAKESPEARE many an hour could be saved or lost in doing that alone. No doubt both teams are typing from the same edition with instructions to follow copy precisely; but another remarkable person, the reader who will check the finished whole with the original, will have to keep a very sharp eye on that matter of linage.

"It was, I think, Huxley," writes Sir JAMES JEANS, "who said that six monkeys, set to strum unintelligently into typewriters for "millions of millions of years, would be bound in time to write all the books in the British "Museum. If we examined the last page which "a particular monkey had typed, and found that "it had chanced, in its blind strumming, to type "a Shakespeare sonnet, we should rightly regard "the occurrence as a remarkable accident." Of course there is no comparison. The monkeys would not know what they were strumming. The compositors at Ottawa are very intelligent and skilful human beings, picked from the populations of two great countries. And yet a little nagging doubt insinuates itself. Some typists understand what they are typing, but I do not the very best sort types as terrific verse and then ventures to suggest that, here or there, the original may not be strictly accurate, precisely what was intended. The typists at Ottawa are all human. Some of them may be young. Will they really scan not only *Romeo and Juliet* without lingering a little here and there and attitudinizing, perhaps, like Gwendolen in MACMAHON's young man writing his love-letter in "this typewriter was a piano"? Are they really all "blocks and stones and worse than senseless "things," who do not care a sly the Duke's curse what the stuff means so long as they can get it typed? Will temperament have no effect on tempo? Confront an ardent typist with Ulysses's speech on order of with Prince of *King Richard II*, will he not either dawdle in disgust or lose points for neatness through haste? Can Lear's ravings be typed with Hamlet's tirades, be typed at the same speed? In reply to your esteemed favour of the 2nd inst. "

And that raises another point. They are all using the same machine—"while this machine "is to them." Any emotion might lead to rough usage of the keyboard, and the touching machine may slay the poetry. But doubtless all these heart-ache are idle. In the selection of talents and temperament allow proper importance is sure to have been paid to the purely mechanical. Both may stand the long strain. Both may admire the SHAKESPEARIAN's workings in all subtleties of words, without which meaning [illegible]

DOWNING STREET AND THE ADMIRALTY

A PLEA FOR THE FOREIGN SECRETARY

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

SIR,—Amid the present turmoil I ask for the hospitality of your columns for a matter which may not have occurred to all, but which appears of real national importance to some.

During the last few years successive Foreign Ministers have been subjected to an almost unprecedented strain, and have borne a burden greater than that resting on any other member of the Cabinet save the Prime Minister. The tension in international affairs has made this inevitable, and it would appear that nothing should be omitted which could contribute towards securing the bodily health and comfort of such overworked and over-burdened men. Nevertheless, the Foreign Secretary is not among those Ministers who are provided with a residence near the place of their labours. Surely this should not be the case? Does he not, of all members of the Cabinet, require somewhere close at hand where he can snatch a few moments of rest, and find prepared for him a meal at those times when he is sufficiently free from preoccupation to think of food? It is well known that recently he has frequently been detained at the Foreign Office till the early hours of the morning, and it is clear that there must have been many occasions when it would be impossible for him to get to his house, or to a club, for refreshment.

Times have greatly changed, and I think many will agree with me that he who bears on his shoulders the immense responsibilities of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs needs accommodation near Downing Street at least as much as does the Chancellor of the Exchequer or the First Lord of the Admiralty. Many have expressed their concern lest the physical strain should prove too much for our overworked Ministers, and would, I am sure, like to think that the Foreign Secretary was able to rest and eat in comparative comfort, rather than be dependent upon an office sandwich snatched during a brief pause in his labours.

This is not, of course, the moment for any action to be taken, but human memory is short and, for that reason, I should like to call attention to the matter now. Even should the present threat to the peace of the world be removed, the strain on those men who bear the burden of Government will only be lessened, and will still remain—a strain, be it remembered, which they have already borne through 12 months of continuous crisis.

Yours faithfully,

August 30 "EX-M.P."

TURNING ON A FRIEND

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

SIR,—In these days of stress and suspense it is easy to overlook Press information of vital importance.

Every one should read and note the article entitled "Turning on a Friend," in your issue of August 29. Then they would realize that Germany had most cordial relations with Poland for five years until the end of last January. They will then appreciate how, with a complete disregard of notice or conditions, Hitler tore up the treaty. What is the excuse? If the Corridor and Danzig affairs had all been settled and had been working well for five years, why this sudden discovery that the position there has become intolerable?

Yours very truly,

CHARLES MARSTON.

4, Camden Park, Tunbridge Wells, Aug. 30.

CLUMSY PROPAGANDA

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

SIR,—The *Yorkshire Observer* on August 1 published two letters purporting to have been written by Lord Milner in 1920 and 1921. These letters express views and sentiments which are wholly dissimilar from his. It would appear that the German propaganda machine is so hard up for material that it is willing to make use of such doubtful material as bogus letters. No one who ever saw Lord Milner will be deceived by these clumsy forgeries, but in case they have been read by those who did not know him I would like to say that they express neither his opinions nor his personality.

Yours &c.,

V. MILNER.

Great Wigsell, Bodiam, Sussex, Aug. 30.

THE MAN WHO KNOWS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

SIR,—In these testing days a true sense of values is again the greatest of human endowments, and a little judicious levity is one of the most satisfying of specifics in attaining to it.

Thus Sir Edward Grey, as he hints in "Twenty-five Years," drew refreshment from *Punch* in the last War, and perhaps not least from that famous alphabet which began:

A is my Aunt with irritoons of Crewe,
Who wouldn't use thousands of Russians go through with a bullet

and ended

Z stands for Zeppelin right overhead,
Which I'm back to now something for Z.

We all owe an enormous debt of gratitude to you, who, once again, have cheered us up to-day by the jubilant wit displayed in your leading article "The Man Who Knows."

Yours faithfully,

KENWYN PARKER.

Polbathwin, Thursley, Godalming, Aug. 31.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

SIR,—Apropos of your amusing leading article in to-day's issue of *The Times* about "The Man Who "knows" many may remember one during the Great War.

Mrs. Aunt's charwoman's sister's son,
Had a spokesman on a wireless one,
Who, as a nursemaid down our street,
Had he knew a man who had a friend,
And he could tell when the war would end.

Yours faithfully,

RUBY LOGAN.

[illegible] Court, Kensington, W.8, Aug. 31.

"NO CLARION CALL"

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

SIR,—In the interesting account of Sir Cyril Norwood's address to the Association of Modern Languages published in your issue of to-day, Sir Cyril says: "The education [illegible] from Nursery to Sixth Form [illegible]

THE AIR ARM

A GREAT FORCE IN READINESS

THE MIRACLE OF EXPANSION

From Our Aeronautical Correspondent

The Royal Air Force in its present condition may without exaggeration be described as one of the marvels which the desperate system occasionally produces. In the last four years its first-line strength has been multiplied at least five times. Expansion of that order can rarely take place without some congestion, some lack of coordination, some failure to bind up the various aspects of a force's activities with a consequent deceleration or loss in efficiency. The miracle of the Air Force is that it has done better than its programme. That is not merely to say that the numbers are higher in all respects than they were expected to be. It is to say with the utmost emphasis that the quality and spirit of the Air Force have never been better even in the roosest days of its short history.

All the facts that could support that statement may not be put in evidence before the public at the present time. If all the facts could be set forth this story would be one of a strangely romantic quality—romantic in the devotion of an industry to a task of a magnitude such as it had never contemplated before, romantic in the harnessing of science to the peculiar and urgent needs of air defence, romantic in the sense that the nation has thrown up, in surprising numbers, young volunteers physically fit in every respect, mentally equipped for a Service in which a vast number of things have to be learned, and moved by a spirit of earnest endeavour, disguised under a light and even flippant manner, yet belonging veritably to the finest traditions of the Service.

THE HUMAN QUALITY

One has succeeded in recent encounters that these young men have no real idea of their own quality. The men who served in the last War are now middle-aged and are modest in their maturity. The Air Force has always set its face against what it calls "line shooting"—boasting of exploits or embroidering a plain tale. The "old" Service has no tales to tell the "young" Service such as would reveal to them the heroism which worked wonders in those days with poor engines and temperamental aircraft. The young men have grown up with the aeroplanes, have entered the Service without qualms about engine failure or aircraft of vicious habits; and they have found grey-haired senior officers flying new types with skill and confidence, using the new aids to piloting and navigation and quietly behaving like the veterans they are with their long experience of many aircraft behind them.

That in itself has been a challenge to the young men if they needed one. Their demeanour in general is that of the best type of educated Englishman who acquires a fairly thorough knowledge of his job and wears it behind the prescribed mask of superficiality. These young men have to be seen not in the mass of leaping along the roads in their motor-cars, or playing violent squash, but at work in their aircraft. Then one sees the steady quality that makes for good flying, the mutual trust which makes for good team work, and the natural quickness of the senses which allows good decisions to be taken immediately as the occasion arises. The quality of the men behind the machines is only in one sense a virtue to be attributed to the Air Force. The Force has declined to lower its standard, but the fact that enough men of high standard were available must be regarded as an inheritance from the nation. The nation, and not the Air Force has produced the men.

MOUNTING OUTPUT

Without the men the expansion would have been vain. Yet once it is established that the men have proved to be fully worthy of the machines, it is interesting to observe how many more factors might still have operated to the expansion. By this time it is common knowledge that the aircraft industry has produced a great many more aircraft than the authorities expected it to yield within the given time. That again is a story which, when it is told in full, will seem too good to have been true to deliberate England. For the present it has to be accepted on the word of those who have watched the output mounting month by month. It is history not yet complete for the productive power of the industry has still to reach its peace-time limit. New factories are still being built. New schemes of production are built in prospect of realization. For a whole year aircraft of the most modern types have been flowing into the squadrons as quickly as the squadrons could absorb them.

Hurricanes and Blenheims, Wellingtons and Hampdens have poured into the bomber units all through the year. Spitfires and Hurricanes have been coming out of the factories at such a rate that the majority of the fighter squadrons have been re-equipped with them during the present year; and it may be recalled that 500 of them were engaged in the air exercises of last month. The mere fact that these aircraft were powering themselves in such numbers laid a new burden on the squadrons. They had to exchange their obsolete aircraft for the new at the same time that they were receiving new pilots, observers, and aircraft-men. Some of the squadrons had to be split up to afford cores around which new squadrons might be formed. The work of training became intensified. The pilots had to learn the ways of new aircraft and all new squadrons while they were beginning the skilled training upon which they have to embark as soon as they leave the flying training schools. How they succeeded is only to be gauged by those who have lately seen them at work, and the verdict of the present writer has already been given in these columns.

It is implicit in all accounts of expansion that the training of the new men must have kept pace with the creation of new units and the multiplication of aircraft. Training schemes began to expand as soon as the expansion was authorized in 1938, and they have kept pace with subsequent increases in the scale of the expansion. The details of [illegible] schools [illegible]