



TRYING THEM OUT: A number of enemy aircraft captured in Libya have been made serviceable and given R.A.F. markings. (Top left) With much satisfaction the swastika is blotted out on the tail of a Me 109E. (Top right) An adapted Me 109F taxis in after a test flight. The split flaps are seen opened out to act as an air brake. Acute tail buffeting would be expected from the operation of these flaps and this may have some bearing on the high tailplane position. (Bottom left) Filling up the fuel tanks of a Junkers Ju 87D. (Bottom right) A number of "whistlers," the music of which will be appreciated by the Germans.

## WAR IN THE AIR

one million tons, which would have been enough to make steel for ten battleships or 20,000 medium tanks. This is attributed partly to the constant R.A.F. attacks on German communications and on the coalfields of the Ruhr. The effect on *moral* is even harder to estimate, but it is believed that the efficiency of German labour during the year was only 60 per cent. of what it was in 1939. The reasons given were that many of the workers now have to live at a distance from their work, because of the devastation in so many cities, thus using up transport, fuel and time in getting to and from their work, and that this increases physical weariness at the end of the day. It is also believed that war weariness is prevalent among the workers. It might have been added that many thousands of the workers come from occupied territories and have no heart in their work. Many of them undoubtedly long to see Ger-

many defeated; and to be set free to return to their homes.

The Royal Air Force is now stronger than the combined Air Forces of Germany and Italy, and is still growing. American production has outstripped that of the two European members of the Axis, and is also still growing. During the year the enemy was only able to concentrate his full air power on one front, namely, against Russia, and, even so, he was obliged to keep a large proportion of his fighters in France to counter the raids of the R.A.F. The year ends with a second front established in French Africa, while Italian Africa is almost in British hands. To build up his forces in Africa the enemy had to rely mostly on air transport, which is naturally less economical and less efficient than sea transport, and he had to use many bombers as transport aircraft and numbers of Ju 88s as night fighters, thus further reducing his fighting strength.

The Air Staff definitely declined to express the opinion that we could win the war by bombing alone. As Russia

is bearing the brunt of the fighting, the Air Staff holds that it is a priority duty to assist her in every way, both by sending her aircraft and by attacking German communications. The effect of these attacks on railways and shipping has hardly received the attention which it deserves. One begins to realise its importance when one hears that since the spring of 1942 one Group in Fighter Command has shot up more than 400 locomotives in Western Europe. No wonder it is difficult to transport iron ore from Sweden!

### The Russian Offensive

THE Russian armies have been sweeping forward in the wintry weather which so hampers the Germans and their satellites but seems to suit the natives of the country. In these movements there have been few allusions to the work of the Red Air Fleet, but occasionally the efforts and failures of the *Luftwaffe* come in for notice. The Germans are resisting stoutly, as one knew that they would do, and they are ingenious in planning