

why the "target crops" are improving are mainly financial and technical. The problems confronting the Minister are much more complex than would appear from your contributor's article, and nobody should envy him the job of stepping up British Agriculture. I should think that the ill-informed general public causes him as much concern as the B farmer.

R. F. NENFELD

[Our Correspondent replies: "The arithmetic is not as simple as all that. For one thing Mr. Quigley has forgotten that wheat can't be grown without straw. A 15-cwt. crop of wheat should include 22½ cwt. of straw, and the controlled price for wheat straw is now 64s. the ton (and you can get more than this 'under the counter'). Add £3 12s. to Mr. Quigley's revenues per acre, and even the odd farmer who harvested non-millable wheat last summer isn't doing too badly. Mr. Nenfeld's complaint that the Government will not reimburse the unlucky or unskilful potato-grower the whole cost of a crop failure is typical of the 'heads I win, tails you lose' economics that is popular in some farming circles. In any case, about a quarter of the cost of the potato crop goes in digging, clamping and riddling, and the lighter the crop the smaller these items are. With a total failure, therefore, the acreage payment reimburses the farmer to the extent of between a third and a quarter of his outlay and not just a fifth. The round figures that I gave of £15 the acre as the cost of growing wheat and £60 as the cost of potatoes were based on representative costings by the university economists. They were not an attempt to guess the average cost of an average yield (a statistical abstraction that soil and climatic variations make almost meaningless), but were only quoted to show how much more expensive it is to get calories from potatoes instead of wheat. In the costings I used, the £60 input returned an output of over 8 tons of potatoes per acre, and the £15 input 19 cwt. of wheat. The trouble with the B farmer is that he skimps the input (especially of fertilisers), and so his yields are lower than they need be."—Ed., N.S. & N.]

PALESTINE

SIR,—I feel that the inaccurate account of certain recent events in Jerusalem contained in the letter "Neutrality in Palestine," published in your issue of January 24th, requires correction.

The circumstances in which patrols were established at the gates of the Old City were as follows: On December 13th bombs were thrown into an Arab crowd immediately outside the Damascus Gate of the Old City by Jews passing by in motor cars. In the explosions which followed, seven Arabs were killed,

and 54 injured. Responsibility for this outrage was claimed by the Jewish terrorist organisation, Irgun Zvai Leumi. As a result the Arabs of the Old City set up road blocks to check the identity of passers-by. These road blocks were cleared away by the security forces. On December 29th the same terrorist organisation carried out another indiscriminate bomb attack at the Damascus Gate. Check posts at all entrances to the Old City were then set up under the supervision of British police and it is they who have been checking the credentials of the Police and Army at these points. The necessity for examining the credentials of members of the police and armed forces arises from recent incidents in which Jewish terrorists have disguised themselves in British Army and Police uniforms to facilitate the perpetration of outrages against the Arab population. The statement that these checks were carried out by Arabs was first made by a Jewish Agency spokesman in Jerusalem on January 5th and was subsequently withdrawn after correction.

Throughout the period of the disturbances there have been adequate British forces within the Old City to protect the Jewish residents and, whenever required, food convoys have been taken to the Jews in the City under strong military escort. Contrary to allegations that the British troops are idle spectators of this communal conflict it can be said that but for their intervention the Jews in the Old City would probably have suffered severely in life and property.

K. W. BLACKBURNE,

Director of Information Services, Colonial Office.

SIR,—Mr. Atiyah tells us that if the Arab League were to accept a Jewish State in Palestine, there would occur throughout the Middle East a revolutionary uprising of the masses of the people against the existing Governments and régimes in the Arab world. Knowing the social and economic degradation in which these régimes maintain the masses, I really cannot imagine a better reason for the speedy establishment of a Jewish State. Can you? R. S. DOUGAN

ARTISTS IN CORNWALL

SIR,—Your readers who were interested in Patrick Heron's article in the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION recently on artists in Cornwall should know that the St. Ives colony is in grave danger of dissolution due to the lack of studios. The number available for professional painters has dwindled from one hundred to thirty-eight during the war years, and now the block of thirteen known as the Porthmeor studios is coming under the hammer. The present owner has agreed to give the St. Ives Society of Artists first refusal if it can collect £6,000 during the next few

weeks, and the studios will then be kept for the use of artists in perpetuity.

The fund inaugurated is in memory of Borlase Smart, who was Honorary Secretary of the Society for many years. Himself a painter of considerable power, he had the unique prestige which courage and loving kindness can bring, and he used it to break down opposition and win recognition for his fellow artists. The younger group named by Patrick Heron owe much of the recognition they have gained to his efforts, for he believed that every young painter should have a chance. It was his particular wish that these studios should be safe for those who follow.

An official appeal has been launched in St. Ives. A copy was sent to me by W. Barns-Graham, one of the leading artists of the younger group whom Patrick Heron unaccountably failed to mention. These were the words she wrote on the back: "Even if you can only spare five shillings, please do, for the sake of Borlase's hard work, for the sake of those studios, for St. Ives as a colony. There is even a box for shillings."

Donations should be sent to David Cox, Honorary Secretary, The New Gallery, Norway Square, St. Ives, Cornwall. Cheques to be made payable to the "Borlase Smart Memorial Fund."

DOROTHY WRIGHT

MONTEVERDI'S VESPERS

SIR,—I am sorry that in referring to the December broadcast of Monteverdi's "Vespers" I should have spoken so off-handedly and inexplicitly. Recently in Perugia I heard, at a musical festival, some Monteverdi Psalms sung by the Rome Opera Chorus and by soloists used to operatic singing. It was the most overpowering musical experience, from a sensuous point of view, that I remember; when I spoke of the "Vespers," it was at the back of my mind and I should have plainly said so. Rightly or not, it has made me much regret the lack of robustness in a good deal of contemporary singing of Italian works here. But I hope Mr. Redlich does not really think that I should like to hear a choral work sung throughout in a steady fortissimo. I think I have said nothing to imply that. I also know that Italian singing can at times be excruciatingly vulgar. HENRY REED

FRENCH SOCIALISTS: A CORRECTION

SIR,—Allow me to correct a small but important misprint in my last letter on the French Socialist Party and the "Third Force." I wrote "... the drop to 10 per cent in the M.R.P. vote in the municipal elections." This came out as "... the drop of 10 per cent." K. ZILLIACUS

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