MONITORING SERVICE

MAN AND MACHINE

WARTIME SECRETS REVEALED

A party of overseas journalists in London visited one of the British Broadcasting Corporation's most important units, the Air Service— for the first time. Like many other B.R.C. departments, it was housed in the converted war office buildings and, in this case, for technical reasons. The visitors learned many things, among them how to operate the equipment

Here are a few facts of the work of the Service which has listened to the world throughout. When Kevon fell, the B.R.C. monitoring service picked up the news in Arabic from a Cairo telegraph and flashed them, the Prime Minister ten minutes before the operational telegram from the War Office arrived. When Mussolini resigned, monitoring service picked up the news in Italian at 22.31 B.R.T., flashed it to news departments of the Department of Information. At 22.55 a report came across on the air in B.R.C. news for Europe in English. At 22.57, having been written in Spanish, checked and duplicated, it went out on the B.R.C. Spanish service.

When Holland was invaded Hitler sent out a message, minute by minute, "Parachutists over... parachutists coming down..." monitoring service was phoning these messages through the Air Ministry before the parachutists had touched down.

Von Krosigk's broadcast announcing the liquidation of the German Eighth Army on Thursday 15th, 1945 was flashed out within six hours, and reached Washington five minutes before the Associated Press carried the news.

Those are some of the achievements of the monitoring service which, at the beginning of the war, the German Government had developed into one of the largest and most efficient listening post in the world.

The word "monitor" requires explanation. Before the war, there was, by international agreement of the countries of Europe, a technical station at Brussels which checked on all wavelengths and warned broadcasting stations when they were too far off their allotted frequency. This checking station, a machine, was the "monitor" (Latin for adviser).

Listening in to other nations' broadcasts actually started in Britain—done by the R.B.A.—as long ago as the Abyssinian campaign. But the word "monitor," derived from the Brussels machine, was not applied to such listening until the time of Munich. The monitoring service of the B.R.C. did not become a definite unit until the late summer of 1939.

Started at the request and on behalf of the Government, it has served all main war and government departments and all B.R.C. news departments with a rapid flash service daily report in the form of the digest of world broadcasts.

"From a few perspiring young men sitting in a stuffy attic, to keep a record of what the enemy was saying, the monitoring service has grown into a highly organised professional news and intelligence service, comprising over six hundred employees and listening to every audible broadcast North and South of the world. When the German surrender it was listening to about one million words a day in thirty-two languages. Some three hundred thousand words were daily translated into English, of which approximately one hundred thousand words were published in a daily digest of world broadcasts. Every twenty-five to thirty thousand a day flashed as an urgent service on teleprinter to numerous War and R.B.C. Departments. In addition,