

These letters are in rotation.

(12)

No. 4 S. F. T. S.,
Saskatoon,

25-1-42.

Dear Mum and Dad,

We are on a "48" this week-end - that means leave from Friday night till Sunday night - so I'm catching up a bit on correspondence.

The exam results came out a day or two ago; I struggled through to fifth place in the course and first in our particular half of it (the course is divided into two sections - Red and Blue). Wish I'd managed to pull off a better flying test, but the latest story anyway is that we all have to have another test as a result of the course extension.

Last night for the first time in about a month I set skate to ice, with rather disastrous results. My posterior has suffered very considerably since I started skating, and apparently I don't improve with a lay-off. You'd be amazed at the amount of damage one small skater can do on a large rink in a couple of hours.

On Friday night I dropped in at the hospital to see Henry Cotton. He was in quite good shape, and even a 'plane smash can't knock all the pep out of him. His leg is in a cradle gadget and his face is badly swollen, but I guess he will be O.K.

The Canadian who was with him was rather worse damaged and will be longer in hospital.

We are in delightful uncertainty now as to whether we will get our wings in a week's time, when the course was originally to have ended, or whether we will have to wait till the end of the course. As usual, no one knows, but personally I think it will be the end of February before they hand them out.

Father, you would have a picnic if you started out to drive in this country. In addition to driving on the opposite side of the road they have a number of other cute little ideas which take a bit of getting used to. For instance in the cold weather when they want to make a left-hand turn they don't wind down the window and shove a hand out; they open the door and slam it shut again. It seemed a batty idea at first, but it seems to work O.K. A good few cars have defrosters or heaters of different kinds, and they certainly need them because the windows ice up in no time. If there are no defrosters they have some system of sticking on an extra square of glass which seems to give satisfaction. Some motorists just give up the ghost and lay up their cars all winter.

There are no real petrol restrictions here yet, but they are issuing pleas for economy and I believe they are going to introduce some sort of rationing in a few months.

I don't think I told you that we had seen "Dumbo," a Walt Disney cartoon which I think you would like, if it ever reaches Hastings. We are gradually getting used to going into these continuous-showing theatres over here; it would be nothing strange to Dad, I guess, but we found it awkward to land plump in the middle of a movie, see it through to the end, and then see what's gone before when the beginning comes round again. They get the pictures very quickly here, on the whole, and the newsreels in particular are always up-to-date. Quite a change to see things which maybe happened less than a fortnight ago.

There's one thing about this city of Saskatoon which I don't think I have mentioned, and that is the vast number of cafés and counter-lunch places which seem to flourish all over the place. There are dozens of them — side by side in some places. Of course, they don't have any milk-bars; but every drug-store serves the same purpose. It would be something new for a New Zealand chemist to start

4.
peddling milk-shakes as well as aspirins.

Have I mentioned that the latest fun in flying is formation work? We have been having quite a shot at it during the week. One chap I went up with swore I came knocking on his cabin window, but I think he was stretching it just a little bit.

Rumour hath it that they are getting a bunch of W.A.S.F.s in to cook for us some time during the week. I hope it's right, because I'm quite positive they couldn't help but make a better job of it.

If this letter is considerably disjointed, you will understand when I explain the strange medley of noises around me. There are two radios going on different programmes - one on a serial and one on very high-class opera - and there's a chap snoring like a buzz-saw on his bunk, so you can see it is labour under difficulties. Anyway, offhand I can't remember any more items this time, so maybe I'd better close before I go clean dotty trying to concentrate on just one thing at a time.

Love from

Arnold G.