

PIGEON DERBY.

First lunch in the restaurant car. Not the ordinary one; this was aboard the pigeon express and nearly 15-thousand feathered racers were having their last hearty meal before the Yearling Race, starting at Berwick on Tweed. The birds were entered by fanciers from all over the country, outside a one hundred miles radius of Berwick. The most distant competitors, from Cornwall, had a flight of close on 400 miles before them.

British Railways earn big revenue carrying pigeons, but these consignments to Berwick on Tweed were unusual, even for them. Prizes to be won in the race totalled close on £700, and that's nothing to what the various fanciers stood to win in the pools they organise. There are 100-thousand fanciers up and down the country.

We can't excitedly cry, "they're off", because nobody can open hundreds of baskets all at once. But soon the air was thick with pigeons. Cautious people stayed indoors.