

# FLIGHT

**First Aero Weekly in the World.**

Founder and Editor: STANLEY SPOONER.

A Journal devoted to the Interests, Practice and Progress of Aerial Locomotion and Transport.

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE ROYAL AERO CLUB OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

No. 419. (No. 1, Vol. IX.)

JANUARY 4, 1917.

[Weekly, Price 1d.  
Post Free, 1½d.]

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Editorial Office: 44, St. MARTIN'S LANE, LONDON, W.C.  
Telegrams: Truditor, Westrand, London. Telephone: Gerrard 1828.  
Annual Subscription Rates, Post Free.

United Kingdom .. 6s. 6d. Abroad .. .. . 11s. 6d.

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The bare official announcement of Lord Cowdray's appointment leaves us rather in the dark as to the exact composition of the Board itself, though it is fairly safe to assume that it will follow the lines indicated by the Home Secretary in his speech in the House a fortnight ago. As we understand it, the primary duty of the Board will be to co-ordinate the production of aircraft for the two fighting services. In future, all orders for machines for the Services will be transmitted from the Admiralty and the War Office to the Board, whose function it will be to place the necessary orders for construction and to see that the machines are delivered in the shortest possible time, consistent with efficiency. That, it is true, does not go as far as we have advocated, but it is a long step in advance, if only for the reason that it marks the end of that unhealthy competition in the market between the Services which has been productive of so much friction and such a marked falling off in all-round efficiency.

## EDITORIAL COMMENT.



At last the utterly impossible is to be achieved! After having for years been told by all sorts and conditions of men, and particularly the "Wait and See" party, that an Air Ministry was a counsel of perfection, excellent in theory, but impossible in practice, the new Government has been quick

to make up its mind that such a Ministry is necessary to the proper conduct of the war!

No time has been lost by the Government in giving effect to its recent announcement that in future the care of our aerial interests

**"The Impossible at Last!"** should be placed in the hands of a competent body, with competent powers to insist upon the carrying out of its policy.

The name of the new head of the Air Board will come as a surprise to most people. Lord Cowdray, who has been appointed to the Chairmanship—presumably this should be Presidentship—of the reorganised Board, is a man of outstanding business experience, and a great organiser. As Sir Weetman Pearson, senior partner in the great engineering firm which bears his name, he has been associated with some of the most noteworthy works of recent times. He will thus bring to his new duties experience probably unique in the business world and which cannot fail to be of capital value at the present juncture. From every point of view the appointment is an admirable one.

Mr. Percy Martin, managing director of the Daimler Co.—a born organiser for maximum output—has been put in charge of the production of engines for motor transport and for aeroplanes. The whole responsibility for the supply of engines for the Army and Navy, motor transport services for Naval and Army aircraft, "tanks," and for agricultural machinery, will be centralised under the control of Mr. Martin. The output in the factories will be specialised, and the best use made of our productive machinery.

The supply of aircraft will be placed in the hands of Mr. William Weir, of Glasgow, who has given valuable help to the Ministry of Munitions in other directions. The Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps will be represented on the reorganised Board, and Major Baird will continue to act as the Board's representative in the House of Commons.

It will be seen that there has been a real setting of the house in order—it is an AIR BOARD that has been evolved and not the travesty which existed under the late Government.

Before we leave the subject, it would be ungracious if we refrained from paying tribute to the work done by Lord Curzon and his colleagues of the late Board. They worked hard and well, and that they did not succeed in evolving order out of chaos was no fault of their own. They were hopelessly handicapped from the start by the faulty constitution of the Board itself and its lack of executive power. Lesser men than they would have given up the fight the moment they saw the utter futility of the task. Instead, they carried on, knowing that something had to be done,