

week before they have got over Sunday. It must be broad-minded enough to engage the interest and enthusiasm of the biggest people for the biggest schemes. For example—and solely by way of illustration—I would like to see the big shipping and other existing transport organisations actively interesting themselves in the development. Such a Department must strive to acquire the best qualities of a private business, and, in a word, it must function as far as possible like a private business, for a public end. It would, perhaps, be alien to our grand bureaucratic traditions, but I should not mind that, for I think it would represent the new spirit which, as a result of war experience, is coming over this country. The new Department should, of course, spring out of the existing Air Ministry, which must be reconstituted and reorganised, so as not only to control the administration of the Royal Air Force, but to act as the supreme authority for the development of civil aviation.

"The first essential step of the new Ministry should be to organise international flying—flying between different countries. This will involve an international aircraft convention. I may say that we have already drafted the articles of this Convention, which is being submitted to our Allies. If they substantially approve it, an international air conference will be held; and I have reason to anticipate that within the next four or five months the principal nations of the world will have reached agreement on this momentous matter.

"Similarly, domestic legislation will have to be passed for the regulation of flying in this country. The draft Bill is now ready, and I anticipate that within a few weeks of the opening of the new Parliament a useful Act will come into force.

"It will be appreciated that until this Convention and this domestic legislation become operative there can be no private flying at all, either international or in this country. In many parts of the Continent a state of war still exists; and, moreover, even if a state of war did not exist, I should oppose any private flying until suitable legislation was passed. It would, indeed, be unfortunate if the development of civil aviation was retarded owing to the effect of a series of fatal accidents due to a lack of absolutely necessary regulations. Eager aviators may chafe under the delay, but I would remind them that, legislation or no legislation, the weather of this unique island is apt to be so variegated, violent, and unpredictable that during the next three months serious flying for transport purposes would anyhow be impossible with our present imperfect navigational arrangements.

"As a part of the help, encouragement, and guidance which I mentioned a moment ago the new Department will have to provide a thoroughly efficient technical section for research and experimental purposes, which section would work in closest touch with private industry. Substantial public expenditure would be necessary for the opening up

of new avenues of progress and for the development of what is proved to be good in private enterprise. Further, the State should acquire in permanence a large proportion of the existing military aerodromes, and should render them available for general use by leasing sheds to private operational companies and merely charging a fee for landing. In this way, while the State would not suffer, private enterprise would be relieved of an exceedingly heavy capital charge.

"The Department should undertake the training of all pilots to be employed on public transport services, whether such services are in the hands of the Department itself or in private hands. Such a course would fulfil two purposes. It would secure public confidence in the efficiency of the pilots, and it would provide a reserve of pilots for the Royal Air Force in times of emergency. From the superabundance of machines at its disposal upon the conclusion of peace, suitable for conversion to commercial use, the State should be ready to dispose of a considerable number at a low price to private operational companies. The new Department should undertake the mapping out and the marking of aerial routes, the lighting of the same by day and by night, and the inspection and certification of all private aircraft. And, above all, it should attend to the special meteorological developments which I have already mentioned. Finally, the new Department must be ready itself to undertake mail, goods, and passenger services wherever private enterprise may be found lacking.

"I have merely outlined, in a manner necessarily somewhat vague, the main contours of the vast subject upon which I have ventured to address you, and I cannot on this occasion do more. I will add just a word about a point which is doubtless in the acute and active mind of every business man here—finance! The scheme which I have indicated will cost money—a lot of money, according to pre-War standards, but a very little according to the standards of war. And however much it costs, it will not be expensive, for it will serve two ends, of which the value is beyond money. First, it will provide this country with a new and tremendous industry, which, in a supreme degree, will constitute and maintain the arterial system of the great civilisation of the future; and, secondly, it will do honour to, consummate, and justify the magnificent work begun by those who are dead, and whom we mourn. It is not given to me to use fine phrases, and Britons are not accustomed to express their deepest feelings with much eloquence, but I must point out to you that our present achievement in the air, and all our further achievement, has been, and will be, built upon sacrifices, upon martyrdoms, upon sudden and violent deaths, upon incalculable devotions, not only beyond the seas, but here at home. We owe the profoundest loyalty to those who are gone, and, when we plan for the years ahead, let us not forget to be worthy of them."

Aerial Escort for President Wilson

As in the case of other distinguished visitors who have recently crossed the channel, President Wilson on December 26th was provided with an aerial escort. A squadron of French machines convoyed the mail steamer "Brighton" until mid-channel was reached, when a formation of 14 British aeroplanes relieved them. Lord Weir was among those at Charing Cross to greet the President, and detachments of the R.A.F. and W.R.A.F. were posted along the route of the procession at Constitution Hill.

Cape-Cairo Air Route

It is announced that the Air Ministry has despatched to Central Africa two parties with machines and equipment to prospect and survey an aerial route from Cairo to Cape Town. The possibility of a flying route from India to Australia via Singapore is also being investigated.

Military Division of the O.B.E.

THE King has been graciously pleased to institute a Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, to date from the creation of the Order, June 4th, 1917. All commissioned and warrant officers recommended by the G.O.C. Independent Force, R.A.F., or employed under the Air Ministry and members of the W.R.A.F. are eligible for the new division. Those who are already appointed to the Order and who are qualified for the Military Division may, on the recommendation of the Secretary of State for the Royal Air Force, be transferred to the Military Division.

The insignia for both Military and Civil Divisions will be the same, but the ribbon of the Military Division will be distinguished by a vertical red stripe in the centre of the existing ribbon.

Aerial Services for Prince Edward Island

At a meeting of business men recently held at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, it was resolved to organise a company to establish a flying service between the island and the mainland. It is suggested that the first route should be via Moncton, Summerside, Charlottetown, Georgetown, Picton, New Glasgow, and Halifax, and it is planned to have a double daily service, summer and winter, to handle mail and express matter.

The Ipswich to India Flight

It was announced on December 24th that the Handley-Page machine, H.M.A. "Carthusian," piloted by Major A. S. MacLaren, M.C., with General MacEwan as one of the passengers, had arrived safely in Egypt. The machine flew by way of Sicily and Malta, stopping a night at each island. Leaving Malta at 2 a.m. on December 20th the machine passed over Bengazi and Sollum, landing, for engine adjustment, at Mersa Matruh, on the African coast at noon. Owing to rain, which flooded the machine, it was impossible to continue, and General MacEwan and the other passengers went on to Cairo by train.

The Cairo to Calcutta Flight

A FEW more particulars are now available regarding the flight of Maj.-Gen. W. H. Salmond, D.S.O., from Cairo to Calcutta in a Handley Page machine piloted by Capt. Ross-Smith, A.F.C. The longest single flight was from Damascus to Baghdad, a distance of 495 miles, which occupied 6 hours 53 mins., while the next longest stage, from Karachi to Nasirabad, 485 miles, took 6 hours 35 mins. During the journey from Damascus to Mesopotamia the machine carried food supplies for seven days, and the General had a letter signed by Sherif Feisal, son of the King of Hedjaz, asking the Arabs to tender any assistance required.