

AIRISMS FROM THE FOUR WINDS

"I would desire to impress on my countrymen the vital necessity of a Navy adequate for our protection at home and for the maintenance of the highways of the ocean for our trade and commerce. . . . It has always been a great power for peace. . . . I believe at the present moment that the Navy is both sufficient and efficient."

Thus Mr. Walter Long in a foreword to "Brassey's Naval and Shipping Annual" for 1921.

It would appear from such an expression from the First Lord that what is wanted therefore is intense concentration in commercial aviation as an economical and easy road to Air Force supremacy in the air. Possibly the hints at cutting down of the Air Estimates as well as the Army Estimates may indicate the forerunner of a real move in the direction of civil aviation as a conduit to an efficient Air Force.

At least a real effort is on the way in the utilisation for practical peace carrying experiments of the passenger airships R.36 and R.37—the work respectively of Messrs. William Beardmore and Co., Ltd., and Messrs. Short Bros.' Airship Factory at Bedford—which may quite well be ready for trial trips by the end of the month. About 50 passengers will be the complement for the first journey to the East, for whom sleeping-berths and other comfortable provision will be installed.

ANOTHER "find" of German aerial material has been made and confiscated by the Fleet in Stettin. This, according to the *Volkszeitung für Hinter Pommern*, was concealed in the grounds of Major von Fuchs, and consisted of undoubted secret Army stores. The goods were sent in large cases, 19 of which contained aeroplane motors, while 22 smaller cases were filled with aeroplane cameras. These cameras are said to be now practically unobtainable. The *Kösliner Volksblatt* says that the stores were hidden to protect them from the Entente.

It is this sort of thing which accounts for the anxious alertness of the French in regard to the machinations of the Germans, and justifies our Allies in their insistence that Germany should now, without further delay, be compelled to really carry out the disarmament requirements of the Peace Treaty. General de Castlenau, in urging instant action, has a sly thrust, with diplomatic moral, at Perfidious Albion in regard to the possibilities of future development. The General, in speaking to the point in the French Chamber, said the other day:—"No doubt we are not alone, but England, for her part, has secured safe guarantees in the destruction of the German fleet. What would be the position of France if some day she had not the valley of the Rhine between her and Germany? Have we told our British allies that the Germans are constructing guns and aircraft which menace even Britain herself? Have you shown the Allies the need for obtaining the integral execution of the Treaty of Versailles?"

By way of further emphasis M. Lefevre, the French ex-Minister of War, referred to a new 77 gun which Krupp was manufacturing as late as last April, and of two new formidable machine guns, one for use against aeroplanes and one against tanks. So that it suggests more than ever there should be no longer any shuffling against provision for that "double or quits" day which is now so freely spoken of in Junker circles, as the aftermath of "Der Tag," which went wrong so badly.

ADMIRAL SIR PERCY SCOTT has not been long in corroborating the realness of roofing in harbours against aircraft attacks as mentioned in last week's *FLIGHT*. In a further letter upon the much discussed problem, "Capital Ships or —?" he tackles the belittlement by Admiral Waymouth of his suggestions in regard, *inter alia*, to the roofing in of harbours, and torpedoes to carry a ton of T.N.T. Dealing with the latter he states: "I have a drawing of one carrying a ton of T.N.T. She is steered from the air by wireless, and a high official connected with the Air Service (Torpedo Department) tells me that there is no limit to the size of a torpedo; that torpedoes can be controlled from the air; that in fact, they are at this moment controlling them from the air."

"My other absurd suggestion," Sir Percy continues, "was in connection with roofed-in harbours. My friend Admiral Waymouth may not know that the Germans during the War roofed in harbours for their submarines. Admiral Waymouth may not know that the Admiralty during the War contemplated making roofed-in bomb-proof harbours for airships, and that these harbours were of a size more than sufficient to take on a battleship. This was kept a great secret; possibly the public and Admiral Waymouth have never until now ever heard of the idea. I ought to know a little about it because their lordships the Commissioners of the Admiralty ordered me to prepare the designs for these roofed-in harbours."

ALL of which should be further inducement for the immediate speeding-up of the civil and commercial side of aviation to the ultimate good of the Empire's Royal Air Force.

It is significant that in a Bill to be shortly introduced into the U.S. Congress by the Fortifications Committee to make the Panama Canal impregnable against attack, possible danger from the air comes first.

THAT'S a weird sort of police performance reported at Winnipeg by the *Paris New York Herald*. "After an aerial battle, in which machine guns were used with telling effect," so the statement runs, "Joseph Gadbury, an alleged confidence man, has been captured at Winnipeg. He is wanted in Iowa for obtaining £3,600 on a promise to build an aeroplane factory. He fled in an aeroplane. Detectives following him obtained the co-operation of the Canadian Mounted Police, who met Gadbury's aeroplane as it crossed the Canadian line and opened fire with machine guns. The battle was kept up until bullets from the police machine punctured the petrol tank and damaged the propeller of the fugitive aeroplane."

Upon mature reflection we think it safest to wait upon "further particulars."

QUITE quaint and certainly very realistic was the installation by Messrs. Handley Page of an airship at the Hotel Victoria for the New Year's Eve festivities. That the affair was no make-believe may be gathered from the fact that the gasbag was 80 ft. by 13 ft. And at the mystic hour of twelve there were "surprises" for the guests emanating from the cabin.

So D'Annunzio, the Italian fanatic poet-aviator, has at last seen reason and agreed to an "armistice." It was characteristic of this mistaken patriot that he should have taken note of the last operations over Fiume from an aeroplane, and should have again distributed further literature from on high. His mad heroics must have cost his country and his fellows a good deal and maybe he will now be able to ease off his superfluous energy through his other hobby, and so help forward the problem of practical aviation.

MORE air-post stamps for the philatelist to mark down for inclusion in his set are noted by Mr. F. J. Melville. He states that Hungary issued two surcharged stamps during the War, on July 4, 1918, for use on correspondence sent by an experimental air mail. These were the 1.50 krone and 4.50 krone stamps, which we have already described. The War service only lasted a few weeks, and was abandoned on July 24, 1918, after several accidents to the aviators. Now the development of trans-Continental air services has led the Hungarian Government to provide some new stamps for use on air mails. These have been created by surcharging new values on the 10 kronen violet-brown "Parliament" stamps of 1916-17 (inscribed "Magyar Kir. Posta"). In addition to the new value the words "Legi Posta" are overprinted. The values and colours of the overprints are: 3 kronen in green on 10 kronen, 8 kronen in red on 10 kronen, 12 kronen in blue on 10 kronen.