

Aviation, which is, we are sure, doing its best with the means at its disposal.

In an appendix to the report this Department deals in a most decisive and convincing manner with the question of the development of civil air communications within the Empire, and shows such a sane and practical grasp of the subject that one cannot fail to realise that, did the matter rest with General Sykes's Department, Imperial aviation would soon take the place which no one seriously doubts it is destined to take ultimately. But unfortunately the Department of Civil Aviation has to work with the scant material provided by the Treasury, and is thus vitally handicapped.

Mr. Holt Thomas's letter contains an excellent example of the way in which this country is lagging behind. Compared with our "28 per cent. share in the London-Paris service," America has, he reminds us, some 3,000 miles of Air Mail lines over which, in the month of October last, the mileage flown was 158,971 miles.

The report states that the Treasury has agreed to set aside a sum of £200,000 per annum for the next three years out of the total Vote for Civil Aviation purposes, to be used as direct assistance to "approved" firms. This figure looks fairly large. Yet when we come to examine those of other countries we find that by comparison it is insignificant. For instance, the subsidy proposed by France for 1922 is 41,382,000 francs, about £1,655,000 at normal rate of exchange. Germany's proposed subsidy is 11,000,000 marks for operational and 10,000,000 marks for constructional firms. Out of our £200,000 per annum approximately half, it is stated, will be devoted to the purchase of machines for use by the operational firms on the hire-purchase system. Even a small country like Holland is proposing a subsidy for 1922 of 370,000 florins (£30,000).

As we have repeated until we are tired of it, and quite apart from its very practical utility, civil aviation is to be regarded as a form of national insurance, and it amounts almost to criminal indifference to suggest we cannot afford it. We simply cannot afford not to foster it.

**The  
 Suppression  
 of Flying**

Under this heading Mr. A. F. Prevost Battersby, in the *Observer* last Sunday, returns to the subject indicated, a theme which he reminds us he voiced some five years ago in the same paper. He seeks again "to rouse unimaginative humanity to a consciousness of its impending peril." Mr. Battersby then proceeds to repeat his old plea for the suppression of all flying, by reason of it being possible in the future, through the aeroplane, to achieve "the destruction within 24 hours of a score of cities, arsenals, dockyards and military centres before any sort of reprisal can be devised," and continues, "It is vain to talk of an air service adequate to deal with such a contingency," which, as Euclid has it, is absurd.

Thus Mr. Battersby lets loose again all his old scare lines, and in addition quotes various recent utterances by more or less responsible public speakers as evidence in support of his indictment, but he omits

to point out that those very utterances have been put forward as imperative reasons why Britain should provide an adequate air service to deal with the very contingency which Mr. Battersby appears to think is likely to eventuate. In fact, as we said when commenting upon Mr. Battersby's original cry of agony five years ago, every argument he puts forward for suppression is an indictment of his own arguments. To attempt at this stage of aviation to stay further development of the navigation of the air is almost on a par with commanding the sea to retire.

No, the building up of a huge commercial aircraft industry in the coming years is as sure a certainty as anything in this world can be, and because such a beneficial opening for mankind *may* be abused by possible Huns of the future, is not sufficient reason to call a halt. As to Mr. Battersby's "facts," we need but quote one item as showing the flimsy basis upon which his "peril to humanity" bogey is erected:

"So accurate has bombing become that an expert has dropped three dummy bombs in succession down the funnels of a warship from a height of some 6,000 feet." It is evident that Mr. Battersby, whilst there is still time, should arrange to retire to a "dug-out" which he prophesies will constitute the future residences of the new poor, war profiteers, and all other wildfowl.

**Aerial  
 Advertising  
 —A Terrible  
 Prospect**

According to the *Star*—which, perhaps, is not to be taken too seriously—there is a scheme on foot for using the London-Lympne air route for the purpose of advertising the wares of a well-known firm of pickle and preserve manufacturers. It is, so the *Star* tells us, the intention to lay down enormous ground signs showing white on a black ground by day, and to be outlined by innumerable electric lamps by night, extolling the excellencies of the "57 varieties." As though this were not bad enough, it is further intended to employ small, fast aeroplanes, flown by "stunt" pilots to write smoke signs in the sky—signs that will be visible to all within a wide radius and which, on a quiet day, will be legible for quite a considerable time.

We are firm believers in the virtue of advertising. We do not believe that any business, great or small, can be created and maintained without the powerful aid of advertisement. But there are limits, and this grandiose scheme seems to surpass the limit of what is allowable either on the grounds of good taste—which has no particular appeal to a certain class of advertising man—or public policy. It is distinctly against the latter that such a scheme should be permitted. Our railways are lined by such outrages on good taste. If they were the least bit artistic we might endure them, but they are not. To these atrocities of the advertising world, are we to have added the terrors of enormous illuminated signs, shouting to the world that there is nothing like the 57 varieties, and must we endure the sight of smoke-screen inscriptions on the very clouds themselves? Not for a moment. And it will be as well if the authorities early make it abundantly clear that this sort of thing will not be permitted.

**Civilian Flying during 1921 in America**

ACCORDING to a review compiled by the Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce of America, civilian flying increased considerably during 1921. Twelve hundred aircraft were operated by civilians, flying a total of more than 6,500,000

miles, and carrying approximately 275,000 passengers. The United States Air Mail also put up a very good record of efficiency over the transcontinental route during the last twelve months, having shown an average of 88.82 per cent. efficiency (completed trips on scheduled time).