

half-an-hour each. The actual time of the whole journey is then increased by one hour. If now, the distance between the two aerodromes is relatively short, it is obvious that the saving in time, from one city to another, is but small compared with the ordinary train and boat services.

That the cost of air traffic depends to a very large extent on the volume of the traffic cannot be disputed. There are a number of overhead charges which cannot be reduced below a certain minimum, and the smaller the amount of traffic, the greater the cost per passenger or per pound of freight carried. Only by increasing the volume of traffic can we hope to reduce the cost, and it has already been shown that the traffic can only be increased by offering such a saving in time as will make the use of air transport really worth while, *i.e.*, over long distances.

The *Morning Post* then goes into the question of why we are subsidising commercial aviation, assuming that it must be for military reasons, and venturing the opinion that civilian pilots would be of very little use. In this connection, we may point out that, as a matter of fact, there is no reason whatever to believe that the commercial pilot would be inefficient for war flying. Thus, there is not a great deal of difference between piloting a machine full of passengers from London to Cologne and piloting the same or a very similar machine filled with bombs to some enemy town. But, apart from that, maintaining commercial air services has the very great advantage that it enables us, at relatively low cost, to keep our designers and constructors at work, whereas if military machines only were being built, the cost to the country would be very much greater, in fact would be impossible under present conditions of financial stringency. Add to that the probability that some day commercial aviation will be able to fly without subsidy—as undoubtedly it will—and it will be seen that the keeping alive of commercial aviation, at what is, after all, but a trifling cost to the taxpayer, combines several very desirable features. It provides work for our factories, enabling them to keep a designing staff together. It provides rapid communication between various parts of the Empire, and thus gives the community increased transport and commercial facilities, and it promises some day to do these things with little or no extra demand upon the taxpayer's money.

With regard to the "case" put up by the *Morning Post* for a separate air service for Navy and Army, the excuse for this sudden attack seems about as logical as the remarks of the young lover in one of Wodehouse's priceless stories, who remarks: "Talking about earwigs, have you ever been in love?"

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Watch America

To those who follow at all closely the progress in aviation, the enormous steps made recently by the United States in the matter of sporting aviation cannot have failed to impress by their significance. Although



An Irish Air Force with the New Year

ACCORDING to the *Derry Journal*, recruiting began in Dublin on January 1 for infantry units of the Volunteer Reserve of the National Air Force, and about 50 volunteers were dealt with in Brunswick Street during the day. The National Air Service is being organised as a thoroughly efficient unit, under the direct control of the Commander-in-Chief of the National Army and the Army Council, and having

America was the country which gave flying to the world, it was nevertheless the fact that never, after other countries commenced to take up aviation, did America approach again to the leading position which the work of the brothers Wright should have given her. During the War, America built machines mainly to designs supplied by France and England. Since the War, with the exception of some very successful air mail services, America at first did very little in the matter of commercial aviation, due chiefly to the lack of uniformity in the air legislation of the various states of the union. Recently, however, America has leapt to the very front rank in sporting aviation, and, whatever pessimists may think, such performances have a very great effect on the prestige of a country. A couple of years ago, France was the only country in which international speed races of any importance were held annually. Then America decided to hold her Pulitzer race, and at once several very fast machines were produced. In last year's Pulitzer a number of machines were entered by the Navy and Army air services, and what has been the immediate result? All the world's speed records have passed to the United States. Lieut. Maughan, on an Army-Curtiss, is the holder of the world's speed record over 100 and 200 kms.—records previously held by Brac Papa and Kirsch respectively. The world's speed record over 1 km. is now held by General Mitchell, Chief of the Army Air Service, after having stood to the name of French pilots for more than 10 years. The world's altitude record is also held by an American Pilot—Lieut. MacReady.

It is all very well to say that these are but sporting efforts and "cut no ice." They do cut a very great deal of ice. When other nations are contemplating the purchase of machines, they will, undoubtedly, turn to the country which holds nearly all the world's records, other things being equal, as the mathematicians say. Not only so, but in the process of designing, building and flying these record-breaking machines America is learning a very great deal, which can be and will be incorporated in other designs, either of military or commercial nature. Thus both aerodynamically and constructionally progress will be made, which will further increase the prestige of her aviation industry.

The question now arises, how did this sudden leap into the very front rank of sporting aviation come about? We think the answer can only be: Because America's air services supported, by direct orders to constructors and participation in the race, sporting events. In this country, R.A.F. pilots are allowed to fly in sporting events, but there is always the feeling that "it really isn't done, don't you know," and as for the participation of Service machines, there is a general holding up of hands and shaking of heads. "Air Ministry machine, you know," "Government property," "Might get smashed," and so forth. Isn't it time we reconsidered the whole position, and tried to learn a little from our more broad-minded cousins across the "Pond"?

as its head Commandant-General MacSweeney, with Lieut.-Commandant Eamon O'Broite and other officers. The headquarters of the Service will be Baldonnell, the well-equipped aerodrome there having passed from the British to the Irish authorities. It is understood that "D.H." type machines will be used in the Irish Air Force, and it is probable that parts of these machines will be assembled over in Ireland.