

which tells of their efforts to paddle the wrecked seaplane to shore. The *Farm* (or *Fram*) eventually came to their assistance, but it was only after 14 hours of anxiety, and when all endurance was giving out, that a small Norwegian motor-boat came to their rescue and towed the explorers to land.

The book is replete with thrills of great adventure in the frozen North, coupled as we have remarked with in-

formation of inestimable value to those engaged in scientific research.

The leader of the expedition is to be congratulated that all returned home safe and sound—even the dogs—despite their perilous adventures. They saw and conquered, and what is more pleasing than the happy return of such a party, bringing with them such invaluable information? This volume contains 50 excellent illustrations.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents. The names and addresses of the writers, not necessarily for publication, must in all cases accompany letters intended for insertion in these columns.

THE LIGHT PLANE CLUBS

[2109] In a recent issue of *FLIGHT*, I notice that in the account of the London Aeroplane Club Dinner Captain Sparks asked if the Secretary of that Club would draw the attention of the Aero Club and the Air Ministry to the fact that the London Aeroplane Club should have preferential treatment. Beyond stating that London is the capital of England, and that the population is greater than any other Light Aeroplane Club centre, I fail to see how Captain Sparks can justify his remarks. Such an attitude is not likely to create harmony with the other Clubs who have had, in most cases, exceptional difficulties to overcome before progress could be made. My own idea is that preference—if such a stupid state of affairs should be brought into existence—should be on the basis of results, and in that respect I think my own Club (Newcastle) could claim a good hearing. This, however, we do not desire, as our own object is to get on with our allotted task.

JOHN BELL

Newcastle-upon-Tyne,
December 28, 1925.

AIRSHIPS IN WAR

[2110] Are large rigid airships of any value in war-time?

My reply is: "No."

I have advanced this view in my recently published "Strategy and Tactics of Air Fighting" (Longmans), and Maj. F. A. de V. Robertson, in his criticism in your issue of December 10, takes exception to it.

"The sphere of the airship," he says, "is to be patrolling the ocean trade routes and their quarries will be raiders like the *Emden*, it being axiomatic that the British Navy will forbid the surface of the sea to hostile carriers so that the airships will never be subject to attack from aeroplanes unless the latter have been released from another airship."

This reasoning, which I know to be that most often advanced by the advocates of military airships, is incontrovertible. It proves conclusively the opposite to what it is intended to prove. It is, in fact, a form of pistol which, when fired, blows off the marksman's own head.

Allow me to pull the trigger. If the British Navy can forbid the surface of the sea to hostile carriers, which implies hostile warships (including submarines) it must be able to forbid it to raiders and to ensure the safety of the trade routes. If the safety of the trade routes is ensured, the only function which the airship could fulfil would be the reconnaissance of stretches of sea water.

The argument to which your critic referred may be summed up thus: The British Navy can prevent hostile ships from approaching the scenes of operations; therefore,

the British Navy requires airships to prevent hostile ships from approaching the scenes of operations. Read that through quickly three times and its force may become clear.

A variation may be played upon the same theme thus: The airship can fight provided the other man cannot hit back. That is, of course, the only satisfactory way of fighting; but the other man, like the happiness complained of by the would-be philosopher, *will keep butting in*.

If the destruction of hostile aerodromes—floating and other—within range of the scene of operations could be ensured by our land and sea forces, we could go to war in the R.33. But wait! If we can ensure the destruction of those hostile aerodromes we must have won the war already, so the R.33 can remain in its tin.

OLIVER STEWART

London.

January 2, 1926

"A" LICENCES

[2111] Will you allow me to point out that in your leader on "Control Without Occupation" in your issue of December 24 you are in error in stating that the private owner's machine "must be certified for each flight by a ground engineer, whom the pilot has to pay"? This regulation only applies to commercial aircraft "carrying passengers for hire." The airworthiness certificate for a private aircraft holds good for 12 months without any further certificate, except in the case of an accident necessitating repairs, which must be certified by a ground engineer as efficiently effected.

All that the private owner requires is an "A" licence for himself, and an airworthiness certificate for "subsequent aircraft" (*i.e.*, not a "type airworthiness certificate") for his machine, valid for 12 months. I do not agree with Mr. Handley Page that these simple requirements constitute a "stranglehold" on private flying. The private owner is not even required to use a licensed aerodrome, but can at his own risk, use any field. All he is required to carry in his machine are his own pilot's "A" licence, certificates of registration and airworthiness of the machine, and—not "log books"—but one "journey log book." In this he need only enter details of times and places of departure and arrival of each flight, of any forced landings and of any damage sustained.

Personally I have always considered these regulations eminently reasonable, and the minimum necessary for safety. The criticisms voiced at the Royal Aero Club dinner you reported were in almost every case made by persons who obviously were not acquainted with the regulations, but confused those affecting commercial and private aircraft respectively.

W. LOCKWOOD MARSH, *Lieut.-Col.*

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT ON ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION

THE Eleventh Annual Report of the Committee for the Investigation of Atmospheric Pollution, has just been issued. The contents are divided into four sections:—Section I deals with the deposit of impurity at 48 different stations. Tables are given showing the stations with the highest and lowest deposits for the year ending March 31, 1925, compared with a general average for the same stations for the previous five years. The rainfall was higher than the average in most stations, while the deposit of tar was lower. There was little difference in the deposit of sooty matter, but the total impurity was somewhat less than the average in most stations.

Section 2 deals with the automatic recorder for suspended

impurity and some very interesting results are given for Blackburn and Stoke-on-Trent. The effect of wind in governing the concentration of impurity is also dealt with at some length.

Section 3 describes dust counter observations made in different countries. There are also observations on settlement during smoke fogs, and a new explanation is given of the causation of the "London Particular."

In Section 4 the special researches undertaken by the Committee are described.

Copies of the publication are obtainable from all branches of H.M. Stationery Office, or through any bookseller, price 5s. 6d., postage 1½d. extra.