



member built on the geodetic principle and powered with two Bristol and tail turret roofs in this view gives a false impression of marring the been revised since the prototype appeared.

as to hamper our own power of scotching the wasps in their nests.

This suggested use of Blenheims as aids to the defensive fighters recalls Gen. Golovine's suggestion of a class to be called "destroyers," namely, long-range fighters seating a crew of at least two, which could be used for various purposes as required. Primarily, their task would be to engage hostile bombers at a distance from our shores, leaving it to the single-seater fighters to deal with them when they, or the survivors among them, got near their target. One school of thought in America is also turning towards that class of machine. General Golovine also advises the use of bombs from the air to attack raiding bombers, but he advocates the use of a mortar to fire them.

It might prove very instructive to try out various sorts of air bombs on a Queen Bee or a Queen Wasp, though the moral effect of a near burst could not be judged.

Exchange or ?

RECENTLY it was announced that, as a result of the visit of the French Air Minister, M. Pierre Cot, to this country, it had been arranged that an exchange of technical information between the French and British Air Ministries should take place.

Last week *Flight* expressed itself unimpressed by that announcement. We based our attitude chiefly on the belief that such exchanges of technical information are already taking place, unofficially, perhaps, but taking place, nevertheless. We had at the back of our mind also the uneasy feeling that although "exchange is no robbery," as the saying goes, it can come perilously close to being robbery when the exchange is 90 per cent. in one direction.

Through political wangles, which are no concern of ours except in so far as they have affected our good friends the French aircraft constructors, France has allowed herself to drift into a position of inferiority in the air, in spite of the unsupported assertions to the contrary of the champions of her present policy. Some of her most brilliant designers have been fettered, and some of her pioneer constructors, such as the Farman brothers, have refused to be a party to the present muddle and have retired from business. Such happenings must be very much our affair while we are as closely in sympathy with France as we are at present.

Bearing all these things in mind, it is curious, to say

the least, to learn from the French Air Minister, in the Chamber, that France has decided to purchase some 50 or 60 American aero engines to be installed in her prototype aircraft, and the licence to build these engines in quantity in the French nationalised factories.

Whether or not French engines are so inferior that something drastic must be done is not for us to decide. But it might have been thought that if France is going abroad for aero engines she would have come to Great Britain. In arranging with M. Pierre Cot to exchange technical information, that was surely one of the things Viscount Swinton might have insisted upon to help in evening-up the exchange.

Wanted—an Explanation

WHEN the announcement was made late in November of last year that an expansion of the Accidents Branch of the Air Ministry was to take place, there were many who hoped that this would result, among other things, in a speeding-up of the issue of official "findings." This hope seems to have been a vain one. It is now five weeks since the mishap to the flying boat *Cygnus* occurred off Brindisi, and it might have been expected that the world would by now have been told what, in the opinion of the investigators, caused the accident in which two lives were lost.

In a large percentage of accidents there is some excuse for delay in arriving at conclusions. The machine may have been totally destroyed and no member of the crew may have survived from whom information could be obtained. Very fortunately, such was not the case in the *Cygnus* accident, and the pilot himself has been able to give his account of what occurred. Thus, it is extremely difficult to see any valid reason for the delay in issuing any kind of explanatory statement.

In the early days of civil aviation it became the custom, a sort of unwritten law, not to publish the results of accidents investigations, at least not until they were given, vaguely and unconvincingly, in the next annual report on the Progress of Civil Aviation. Doubtless we shall be told of the cause of the *Cygnus* accident in the next annual report, but that will, in all probability, not be published until some time in 1939.

In the early days there was some excuse for suppressing the results of accidents investigations. Engines in those days were very unreliable, and forced landings were of frequent occurrence and led to many mishaps. Nowadays, however, engine failure is hardly ever responsible for an accident, and in the interests of the constructors, no less than of the travelling public, it is desirable that the full facts should be made known, and that without delay.

The Airports Exhibition

THE Aerodrome Owners' Association has decided not to hold an airports exhibition this year in connection with the Airports Conference to be held on January 19, 20 and 21. It was felt that in a twelvemonth the changes in airport equipment are not very great, so that if the exhibition were to be held annually, many of the exhibits would of necessity already be familiar to visitors.

Probably there is much to be said for this point of view, but it would appear that by throwing the exhibition open to the general public a good deal of interest would be created and at least some portion of the expense of showing might be recovered.

As an alternative, it might be possible to have such an exhibition every year, but to hold it in London every other year only, selecting provincial cities for the alternative years. It is even possible that an improvement might be effected by holding the exhibition at an actual aerodrome instead of in a town. Much of the aerodrome equipment could then be shown actually working, and those interested would have a better opportunity to judge for themselves the relative merits of competing products. It is understood that certain members of the Aerodrome Owners' Association are in favour of such a course, and certainly any scheme of this kind merits the very closest examination.