

### Commercial Aviation

of ear-plugs against laughing jackasses. One wishes him well, and may nothing he writes turn and rend him, boomerang fashion.

Commercial aviation is essentially international. You just cannot get away from it. The other day I met the

British representative of a Dutch air transport company, who, in a Swedish machine of American manufacture, was paying for a cup of tea in Netherlands money and getting his change from the steward in English money. The tea was a judicious blend of Indian and China. A. VIATOR.

### The Congo Service

SINCE the question of a government subsidy to the company has not yet been cleared up, Sabena is to discontinue, for the time being, its service to the Belgian Congo.

### Another New Type for Air France

THE question of how their new prototype, the Couzinet 10, is to be utilised, is a source of discussion within the Air France offices. The machine was first flown on August 2 of last year and went to Villacoublay for its official tests on November 26. The pilot in charge of the trials is Dubordrier, and he has registered a cruising speed, at 74 per cent. power, of 208 m.p.h. The machine has Hispano Suiza 9 V engines of 650 h.p. each.

### New York Terminus

THE conversion of the Glenn Curtiss Airport, North Beach, Queens, N.Y., which is now taking place, is approved by a report recently sent by the New York Harbour Board, the responsible authority for airports in New York State, to the Governors of New York and New Jersey State.

The airport will be enlarged to serve as a terminus for the transatlantic services. More than 105 acres will be added by land purchase and reclamation on the quay, making a total area of 429 acres. The airport will be opened in 1939, and will serve as a landing ground for visitors to the World Fair, whose grounds it adjoins.

Further recommendations of the report are for an airship mast at the Floyd Bennett Field, and extension of the Newark Airport. The report also recommends that the New Jersey Senate shall retain sufficient land in the plain of the Passaic River for any later developments.

### The Night Mail Accident

THE opinion held by the majority of the pilots at Croydon in the matter of the accident to the D.L.H. night freighter on the night of November 26 was largely substantiated during the inquest, which was held on January 6. It would seem, reading between the lines, that the machine accidentally started its take-off from a point which did not actually provide the maximum possible run, and that the pilot was possibly turning on to course, thinking that he had several hundred yards of clear aerodrome in front of him, when the machine struck the hangar.

Capt. Pelly, who took off in a similar machine soon afterwards, said that the visibility was so bad that it was not possible to follow the white line and that he chose to start his run from the farmac end so that he would know exactly where he was. He added that some time previously one of the freight machines had, in similar circumstances, been "lost" on the aerodrome. The difficulty involved in taxiing to the desired point on a fog-bound aerodrome with an irregular boundary may well be imagined, and our sympathy is extended to D.L.H., whose pilots have flown the night mail with such astounding regularity during the past years.

### Reducing Radio Congestion

NOW that the amount of air traffic is so seriously congesting the available radio wavebands, it is only natural that attempts should be made to introduce equipment which will help to make every machine a self-contained unit so far as normal radio navigation is concerned. Not long ago a medium-wave "four-spoke" beacon at Croydon was transmitting experimentally, and now a permanent omni-directional beacon at Mitcham is in operation. Its purpose is to provide D/F and homing facilities for machines up to and after the moment at which they are ready to enter the Croydon controlled zone.

This beacon is designed to be used in conjunction with a similar one operating on the same frequency at Schiphol, Amsterdam, the periods of transmission of which immediately precede those of the Mitcham beacon. The frequency is 266 kc/s (1,128 metres), and the transmission continues for one minute in every three, the signal consisting of a succession of broken call signs (GED) with a dash of 42 seconds' duration to facilitate D/F and homing work.

The beacon has now been in action for some little time, and so far only one very polite transport pilot, who did not want to worry Croydon's control with unnecessary QDMs, has attempted to make his final approach at Mitcham.

### Substratospheric Transport

A T.W.A. pilot who has probably spent more time in the substratosphere than any other living man—Capt. D. W. Tomlinson—speaking at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, said that the company's research had shown that the speed of a properly equipped machine would increase 36.4 per cent. at 30,000 feet over its speed at sea-level. "Regular transport operation at 30,000- to 35,000-foot levels," he said, "will be with us within the next five years."

"Our objectives in these high altitude flying studies," he continued, "were four: First to choose the best method of supercharging engines; second, to determine the actual increase of speed with altitude; third, to make actual measurements of speed at 30,000 feet; and fourth, to make extended 'overweather' flights to determine actual meteorological conditions at the base of the stratosphere. . . . During one flight, made on December 17, 1936, when we calculated our air speed would be 225 m.p.h., we actually travelled at a ground speed of 384 m.p.h. with a following wind."

Capt. Tomlinson suggested that the U.S. Government should carry out regular weather observation flights. He said that there were about fifty Government machines now in service which would be suitable for this work. "A large number of meteorograph stations," he said, "should also be established to augment the data obtained from aircraft observations, and to extend our knowledge of conditions in the stratosphere to, say, 50,000 feet. Forecasting at these altitudes will also be aided through development of the radio-meteorograph and by double theodolite balloon soundings." His talk was followed by an address by the T.W.A. chief meteorologist, Mr. E. J. Minser, who is one of the authorities on the Norwegian "air mass" method of weather forecasting. This method is now adopted by the U.S. Weather Bureau.

### International Good Fellowship

SOME idea of the way in which the Skål Club of London has grown since the idea was first introduced over here some three years ago could be gathered from the very satisfactorily large number of members and guests present at the Club's second annual dinner and dance held last week. Mr. R. W. Waugh, the agents' manager for Imperial Airways and chairman of the Club, took his rightful place, and Mr. Hans Ostelius, London manager of A.B. Aerotransport, acted as an efficient, amusing and stentorian toastmaster. This arrangement was a just and fair one, since to Mr. Ostelius must go the credit for introducing the idea to London with the help of Mr. Waugh, whose wide connections made this development possible.

The toast of the Club was proposed by Mr. G. C. Rhodes, general manager in the U.K. for the French Line, who spoke largely about the Club's future, while it was left to Mr. Waugh, in his reply, to explain some of the points in the Club's development and to continue in one breath to propose, in his turn, the health of the visitors. To this toast Mr. L. Schoevaerts, president of the Skål Club of Brussels, suitably replied.

It was felt that the evening would be incomplete without a few words from Mr. Tom Potter, manager of the Travellers' Insurance Association and editor of that popular publication, *Travel Topics*, and, after explaining the more erudite details of the menu, Mr. Ostelius duly called on him. Following the announcement of a long list of prizes for luckier guests, all of which were in the form of free passages to various parts of Europe, Mr. Potter not unnaturally took the opportunity of suggesting that something might be done to encourage people to travel in the reverse direction—in other words, to visit this country. Thereafter the company adjourned while the floor at the Trocadero was cleared for dancing.

For those to whom the Skål Club is something new, it should be explained that it was started, as its name might imply, in Sweden by Capt. Carl Florman, of A.B.A., and is designed to foster international good will with, indirectly, the international tourist business. The organisation is still comparatively young, and it was only last spring that the fourth annual congress was held in Paris and was backed there, among others, by the French Government. Other congresses have been held at Brussels, Lucerne and Stockholm, and the association is now firmly rooted in twenty-four European countries, quite apart from Batavia, Singapore and, shortly, Brazil. The fifth congress, it is hoped, will be held in London this spring. The membership is confined to members of the travel and transport organisations.