

FLIGHT

and
AIRCRAFT ENGINEER

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The Outlook

Controlling the Uncontrollable

NECESSARY though it is to formulate rules and regulations to cover the movements of individual aircraft, we cannot help feeling that the new series of directions designed to this end are primarily the result of a desire to "pass the buck" rather than to clear the air. There is no doubt that the Ministry of Civil Aviation, and even the Air Ministry, has always suffered from what can only be described as a "collision complex." So long as this possibility is properly guarded against, the worthies responsible for the new series of *Notices to Airmen* will no doubt feel able to sleep quietly in their beds.

In fact, of course, the average pilot will still tend to ignore all the words that have been written and to proceed on his or her way while using ordinary common sense—unless personally pulled up by a control officer or other person of authority. The amateur will set off when he thinks he is able to get through, and will fly at a height at which he is best able to cope with the situation—regardless of the regulations. In low cloud and rain he may fly at tree-top level, and in ground haze he may fly at just that height which will allow him to see through it.

The idea of collision will hardly be considered, and this apparent indifference seems to be statistically supported. Except in the immediate vicinity of busy airfields, the danger of collision is negligible, and accidents from this cause have been incredibly rare, even during the war period, when the number of uncontrolled air movements was greater than it has ever been, or likely to be during the next decade. There is certainly need for strict regulations to cover the airfield danger—and not only at busy terminals, where the majority of aircraft are under radio control. In certain conditions of cloud height and visibility many of the orbiting aircraft are flying at same height and at much the same distance from the airfield perimeter.

The most attractive feature of the "new order" is the return of even more adequate meteorological facilities, both at airfields and in broadcast form. The pre-war Borough Hill transmissions were of immense value to the pilot who needed to make a preliminary decision before wasting valuable time in travelling to his airfield.

Casual criticisms apart, the new arrangements are essentially good and show that the Ministry of Civil Aviation has the whole situation well in hand. So long as we are not bombarded with too many long-winded directions—and the more there are, the less likely they are to be read and followed—all will be well. We might almost suggest that the important points could usefully be summarised when the plans are complete.

The New R.A.F. Pay Rates

OTHERS besides Mr. Micawber have discovered the fact that economics govern human existence.

Every member of the Fighting Services below commissioned rank is interested in the new rates of pay recently announced by the Government. The salient features have been dealt with by the daily papers, and have undoubtedly been studied with care by sailors, soldiers and airmen. Not every paper, however, has brought out the fact that the White Paper on the subject introduces a new organisation into the Royal Air Force, and abolishes certain anomalies which had grown up in the past.

Summarised briefly, these changes are as follows: There will be fewer officers in aircrews; there will be no direct appointments to short-service commissions from civil life; and there will be a new system of ranks for aircrew airmen. In addition, the number of trade groups among airmen who serve on the ground will be reduced from six to four.

When, in 1912, a committee decided on an organisation for the new Royal Flying Corps with its Naval and Military Wings, the principle was laid down that pilots