

# FLIGHT

and  
AIRCRAFT ENGINEER

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## The Outlook

### The Old Year—

"HISTORY is bunk" is a saying ascribed, rightly or wrongly, to Mr. Henry Ford. Whatever may be the correctness or otherwise of the alleged parentage, one is inclined to believe that the originator meant that there is little profit in looking back, and that to make progress one must look forward. That is, of course, undeniable, but it is equally true that unless one looks back and profits by one's mistakes, progress is likely to be erratic. The Royal Navy takes a very realistic view by allowing a man to make one big mistake but no more. The man who makes the same mistake twice is obviously incapable of profiting by experience or, in other words, fails to take into account the lessons of his past history.

It is the same with groups of individuals, from small communities to large communities and whole nations. The closing of a year and the opening of another is a good time for taking stock, not only in order to profit by the mistakes made, but also to discover whether the innovations begun during the past year promise to lead us in the right direction towards the specified goal.

For British aviation the year 1946 must be set down as one of very considerable achievement. One particular aspect stands out as significant and full of promise for the future. The aircraft industry has, in spite of many and great difficulties, managed its conversion to peace production with remarkable smoothness and speed. At the same time as firms have changed from military to civil aircraft types, many quite revolutionary ideas have been tried out and have in turn led others yet to be tested and proved. Records are the most obvious signs of progress, and at the upper end of the

have appeared and, in both aircraft and power-plant fields the British names stand very high in the world. The success already achieved of the export drive so boldly undertaken by the Society of British Aircraft Constructors bears testimony to the fact.

It is to be regretted that the political aspect has not managed to keep pace with the technical. That was to be expected. In technical matters we have only ourselves to consider. As soon as politics, especially international politics, enter the arena the picture changes. Yet here also we have managed to attain something—the Bermuda agreement, for example. Still in the international field, but of a technical character, satisfaction must be felt with the work done by P.I.C.A.O. The progress made by that body is very praiseworthy, even if many problems still await solution.

Altogether the year 1946, although it might have been better, could very easily have been so much worse.

### —And the New

WITH much on the credit side of the ledger, for which we should be duly thankful, there are unfortunately a good many items on the debit side which are far from satisfactory. The most disquieting among these is the great number of lives lost in air accidents. During the war, life came to be held cheap, as is the way of wars. But in a world which will, we hope, be at peace some day, such disasters must not be allowed to happen.

There is no single cause of all these crashes. They are due to a variety of circumstances, but on the whole they may, perhaps, be summed up in the homely phrase that we are running before we have learned to walk. We are proud of the great speeds attained, on the globe and we have not yet learned to fly safely at 100 mph. It is not too late to suggest that we do plead for more

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