

Letters

The Editor of "Flight International" is not necessarily in agreement with the views expressed by correspondents in these columns. Names and addresses of writers, not for publication in detail, must in all cases accompany letters.



The HM.360—latest single-seater Flying Flea available to amateur constructors—referred to by Mr Best-Devereux

"Safe Aircraft"

SIR,—I was interested to read the remarks of Capt C. H. Latimer-Needham (Letters, December 20) following the suggestion by Mr Wills that the Flying Flea formula is a possible solution to the problem of safe flying.

Like Mr Wills, I have also flown a post-war version of the Mignet formula, and it is quite an experience. After many years of development and study the original major defect of this type of aircraft has been understood and cured, so that the Flea in its latest form is a much more satisfactory aircraft from the point of view of longitudinal control. There still remains, however, the serious problem of control in the rolling plane, and it is significant that a recent attempt in France to produce a cheap two-seater to the Mignet formula ended up with ailerons fitted.

All credit should be given to Henri Mignet for his fidelity to his formula and the hard work he has put into it. Conventional light aircraft have also been improved in so many ways that the vicious stall and spin characteristics of light aircraft at the time of the original Flying Flea are no longer so. Thus any further development of the formula is a hard battle ahead when compared with three-dimensional control available in modern light aircraft with their gentle stalling characteristics and good stability.

I enclose a photograph [reproduced above—Ed] of the latest single-seater available to amateur constructors. This is the HM.360, of which quite a number have been built in France.

Incidentally, in 1936 it was Capt Latimer-Needham who published grave warnings about the possibilities of danger in the HM.14, which subsequent history proved to have been so true.

Panshanger Airport, Herts

H. BEST-DEVEREUX

Low Fares First?

SIR,—So the Government is going to invest (?) £70m-odd of taxpayers' money in a Mach 2 airliner, the BAC/Sud (or if you are French the Sud/BAC) Concord.

A few rough calculations indicate that this aircraft will have a work capacity of 154 per cent compared with a typical member of the current generation of jet airliners, with a first cost at least double. Add to this the obvious high operating and maintenance costs, apart from the special rates of pay which will undoubtedly be demanded by aircrew, and the high insurance rates.

It is therefore clear that operators of such an aircraft will have a hard time to make a profit, unless the fares are raised to a level compatible with the high costs, both of purchase and operation.

Why do we have all this speed mania, everybody (except most of the passengers) itching to do Mach 2, or better still Mach 3? It's time someone called a halt to this "rat race" and thought about giving the airlines a reasonable profit, and the passengers low fares. If I wanted to go to New York (not that I do) I would rather go by Belfast for £30 than by Concord for about £100, and I am sure that at least 80 per cent of other passengers would agree with me. It would be interesting if someone were to carry out a survey on this and then publish the results. It could have far-reaching results on the future of air transport.

Surely some of this money that is being thrown around could go to Handley Page for development of their laminarized transports. This could prove to be money well spent

as it would present the airlines with an aircraft with good economics, the performance of current jets, and a similar first cost, thus paving the way for lower fares.

I thought that it was realized that economic air travel could only be achieved by the use of the minimum power compatible with safety, for the maximum number of seats, round about 1920. Now, in 1962, I am convinced that they still have not realized this and thus eagerly rush into the fray of competitive slaughter, thereby destroying their own economics. If airlines continue to sustain losses like those of 1961, then it may be assumed that they will become like British Railways (higher fares for bigger losses), and as there are not many Dr Beechings, the air transport industry will be in a sorry state.

Greenford, Middx

TERENCE L. MORRELL

Sudan Air Force Dakotas

SIR,—The Sudan Air Force Dakotas mentioned by S. Percy (Letters, November 22) were purchased from the RAF at the time they were disposing of all their Dakota fleet. They were normally only allowed to be sold to Commonwealth or British owners, with the proviso that if the RAF should need them in case of war they were to be handed back.

In the case of Sudan Airways, special dispensation from this proviso was obtained as the Sudan was about to gain its independence and would therefore hardly be in a position to make any such undertaking.

These aircraft had flown so few hours from new when we received them in Sudan Airways that we considered them just "run-in."

London SE1

M. A. JACKSON

IN BRIEF

Mr F. T. Nettleinghame would be grateful to hear from any pioneers with recollections of Miss Trehawke Davies and Mr Rhodes-Moorhouse, two early Cornish fliers, and asks that replies be sent to Couch's Cornish Museum, Joan's Cottage, Polperro, Cornwall.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Jan 6 Blackbushe Aero Club: New Year Fly-in.
- Jan 9 Kronfeld Club: "Touring in Italy and Switzerland," by Philip Wills.
- Jan 11 Royal Aeronautical Society: a.g.m.
- Jan 15 Photogrammetric Society: Brains Trust (Question Master, Prof E. H. Thompson).
- Jan 16 Kronfeld Club: "Post-war Development of Gliders," by Frank Irving.
- Jan 16 Society of Environmental Engineers: "Precise Measurement of Temperature and Humidity," by K. Fletcher.
- Jan 18 Institute of Navigation: "The Navigation of Satellites and their Launching Vehicles," by J. E. Clegg.
- Jan 23 Kronfeld Club: Film, "Friendship 7."
- Jan 29 Institute of Transport, West Middlesex Group: "Airport Traffic Handling Today and Tomorrow."
- Jan 29 Institute of Electrical Engineers: Discussion, "Connectors in Aircraft," opened by Cdr L. S. Bryson, Wg Cdr R. E. Powell and A. J. Cope.
- Jan 30 Kronfeld Club: "Hazards of Aerospace Journalism," by Ken Owen.