

HONOURING MR. CLAUDE GRAHAME-WHITE.

IN response to the official notification in FLIGHT, a very representative number of flying men and keen helpers in the cause of aviation foregathered at the Royal Aero Club banquet, offered to Mr. Claude Grahame-White last week at the Carlton Hotel, to give the guest of the evening a hearty welcome upon his return from his very successful visit to the United States. Incidentally the International Aviation Trophy presented by Mr. Gordon-Bennett was formally placed in his keeping.

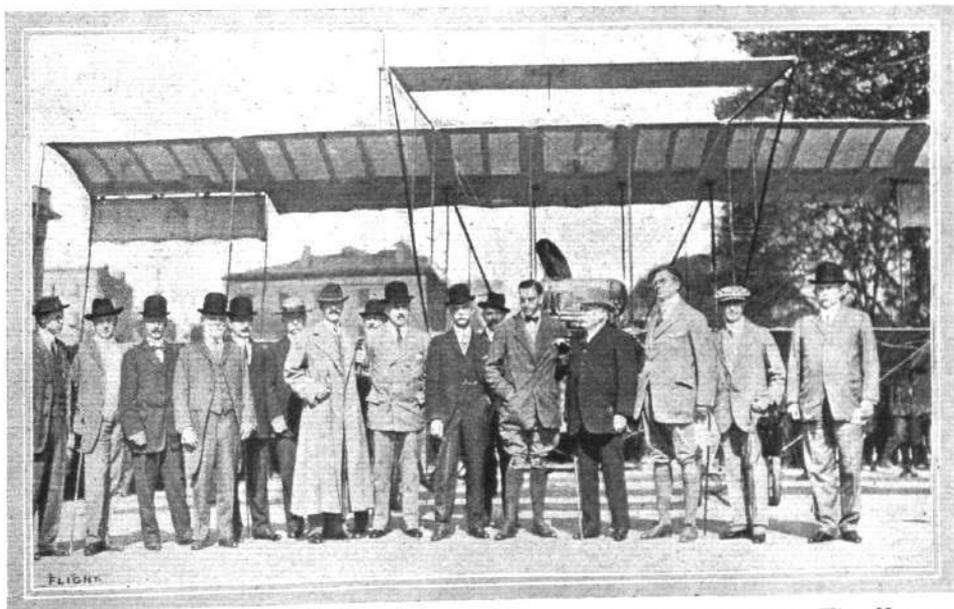
The gathering took the form of a pleasant little Club dinner, and the forty or fifty members who were present were like a happy family honouring one of their number. The whole thing was of an informal character, and naturally after the loyal toasts had been disposed of, the toast was proposed by Mr. Roger Wallace, the Chairman of the Club, who presided, and very gracefully responded to by the hero of the evening.

Many of the points Mr. Grahame-White made were possibly in the knowledge of most of his listeners, but the major part of it being history, it very greatly added to the interest attaching to his speech, as coming from the man himself who made that history. The details of his work at Belmont Park, leading up ultimately to the formal protest in connection with the Statue of Liberty prize, were gone into in detail, and corroborated in every way the opinion which appears to prevail that he was undoubtedly, under the rules, entitled to be awarded the prize. Mr. Grahame-White was very emphatic, however, in regard to the suggestions that had been made that he regarded the Americans as bad sportsmen. Quite the contrary, he maintained, was the fact. Of course, there were poor sportsmen in America the same as there were in Great Britain and every other country in the world, but taking those associated in aviation in America, his verdict was distinctly in favour of their being sporting to a degree. Any troubles which had arisen at Belmont Park or otherwise he was inclined to attribute more to want of experience in such an entirely new undertaking as aviation. That being practically the Americans' first international meeting, it was hardly to be wondered at that slips and little episodes which might at the moment appear extremely unpleasant, occurred which some have been attributing to bad faith rather than want of experience. Great Britain had learnt her lesson in the past with her international meetings at Bournemouth and at Lanark, and no doubt the United States had

also by their international meeting gained experience which at any future gathering would bear fruit.

Dealing with the Gordon-Bennett Cup Race, it was very gratifying to hear the praise meted out by Mr. Grahame-White to the house of Blériot for the manner in which they rushed through and shipped the racing monoplane to New York in response to a cable from Mr. Grahame-White, enabling him thereby to compete on behalf of Great Britain and bring back the Cup for contest in this country in 1911. When Mr. Grahame-White arrived in America, although he was nominated as one of the British representatives, he had very little inducement to compete, seeing so little chance of securing with his machines this "blue ribbon" of the aviation world, by reason of the superior speed monoplane of the leading French competitor, M. Leblanc. It was only at the last hour, as it were, that he determined to make a try to uphold British prestige, and when it is understood that this Blériot racer did not arrive at Belmont Park until 36 hours before the opening of the competition, the efforts successfully put forward by Mr. Grahame-White as representing the Royal Aero Club may be the more generously appreciated by his fellow-countrymen. The machine had then to be assembled, tested and tuned up, and again adverse weather for all practical purposes prevented Mr. Grahame-White from trying his machine before he actually started in the race. Once or twice round the course was all he was able to manage, yet although never having before been within touch of one of the 14-cyl. Gnome engines or a Blériot racer, he without the slightest hesitation took the air, and made the magnificent fight against the world for the Trophy. Very generous was Mr. Grahame-White in his almost affectionate reference to the fine work and the ill-luck of his French competitor, M. Leblanc. It almost made his hearers feel that as a sportsman he would not have been a little bit sorry had he taken second place to M. Leblanc under the circumstances. It was just the luck of war, and he was first in distance just about by a "neck," and Leblanc was beaten, but in speed magnificently in front.

Amongst those present at the banquet was Mr. Clifford B. Harmon, one of the, if not the leading, amateur aviator of America, and, through his recent association with him in America, the close friend of Mr. Grahame-White. To Mr. Moore-Brahazon was



Mr. Claude Grahame-White and the Military Chiefs of the Government when he called at the White House, and the War and Navy Departments in an Aeroplane.—Reading from left to right: Richard R. Sinclair, Capt. Barr, Major George O. Squier, U.S.A., Brig.-Gen. James O. Murray, U.S.A., Capt. H. B. Wilson, U.S.N., Commissioner Johnston, Commodore John Barry Ryan, Brig.-Gen. A. W. Greeley, ret., Maj.-Gen. Leonard Wood, Gen. Oliver A. Bell.