

**AERO EDUCATIONAL PREMIUMS.**

By GRIFFITH BREWER.

No science has in its infancy ever been in greater need of inventive ingenuity than the science of aeronautics. Consequently every scheme which may attract inventive talent and encourage men to study the laws and phenomena relating to the atmosphere should be welcomed for the furtherance of the art of flight.

The inventor, just the same as other men, must profit by his work, or he will turn his attention to other things in order to keep his home together, and this necessity of enabling the inventor to reap his just reward has long been recognised by the State, for it grants patents which enable the inventor and those who pay him royalty to exercise the invention exclusively for fourteen years, and so recoup himself for his work and outlay.

Patent specifications, like other legal documents, require to be drawn by skilled hands, and consequently 271 patent agents exist on a roll known as the Patent Agents Register, and it is to one of these that the inventor of a flying machine goes with his invention when he first conceives it, and has it in a nebulous state. Obviously, it is in the interests of the inventor of the aerial invention, to discuss the specification with a patent agent who has some knowledge of aeronautics, but unfortunately there has been too little inducement in this small profession for its members to acquire more than a smattering of the subject, with the result that patentees of aeronautical inventions have not been able to command the amount of technical help which they can so readily obtain in the older branches of the manufacturing arts.

The object of this scheme is to place some inducement in the way of patent agents to take up the subject of aeronautics more seriously, and thus qualify themselves to be of greater service to their clients in this new industry. In recruiting several patent agents to specialise in aeronautics, a considerable service will be done for those engaged on aeronautical experiments and inventions, because they will be given better opportunities of securing good protection, and thus in finding their inventions more profitable than they otherwise might, they will be encouraged to persevere and produce still further advances in the cause of aerial science.

Were I Chancellor of the Exchequer, with a desire to strengthen my country against foreign invasion, I should consider it my duty to encourage every Englishman to acquire some knowledge of aeronautics, but unfortunately, those in office regard other calls as more important.

There are two kinds of tests open at the present time, viz., that involving skill and dexterity, and that involving general aeronautical knowledge.

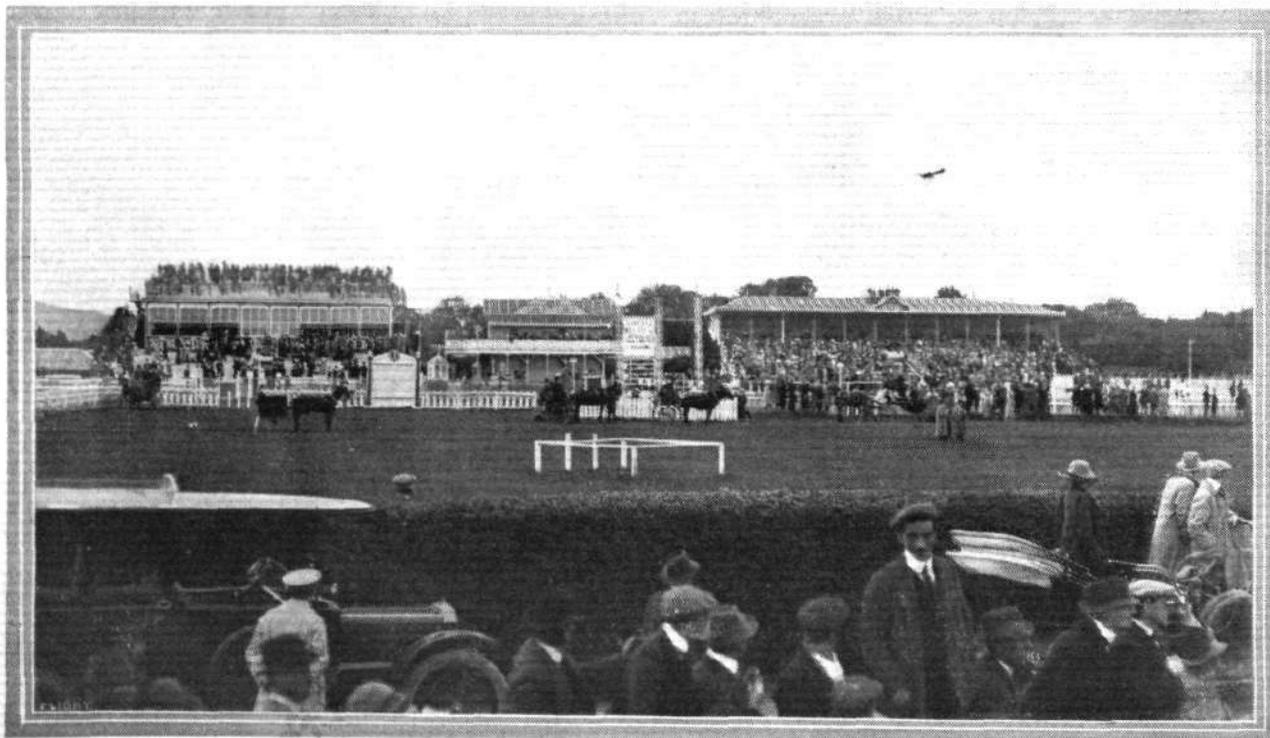
The first of these is recognised by the Royal Aero Club

by the issue of aviation and aeronauts' certificates, whilst the general aeronautical knowledge is recognised and judged by the Aeronautical Society, which admits members who possess the necessary knowledge to become Fellows and Associate Fellows. In order to apply a standard, I should, had I the means at my disposal, reward all those who obtained the Royal Aero Club certificates, or who were admitted to the technical side of the Aeronautical Society, but it is necessary to move more modestly. The Royal Aero Club certificates have the Royal Flying Corps and other sporting inducements to make them attractive, but acquirement of general aeronautical knowledge has hitherto gone unrewarded. It is, therefore, proposed to offer premiums to those who acquire aeronautical knowledge and who prove their attainments by passing the tests imposed on applicants for Associate Fellowship and Fellowship of the Aeronautical Society. But even to offer premiums to all who secure the qualifications of Associate Fellow and Fellow of the Society would require a long and lasting purse, so the first attempt must be confined to a small profession, and let us hope one which will carry the benefit of acquired knowledge outside its own ranks. It is for these reasons that the first experiment in this direction is to be confined to the little band of patent agents, and if the members of that profession respond to this appeal for them to add aeronautics to the subjects which they take seriously, then perhaps some larger sum might be brought forward to give similar inducements to the members of some larger professions, such for instance as to officers of the Army, or officers of the Navy, who could thus be encouraged to acquire the necessary aeronautical knowledge and enter the technical side of the Society.

The premiums will consist of £25 to every patent agent becoming an Associate Fellow of the Aeronautical Society, and a further £50 on becoming a Fellow, and these qualifications are open to all patent agents who, being members of the Society, show themselves to be possessed of the necessary aeronautical knowledge. Donors to the fund, however, cannot receive premiums. The fund from which these sums are available for a period of five years, has been opened with a sum of £200, contributed equally by Mr. John Dunville and myself.

Every facility will be given to patent agents wishing to become members, and they may obtain the necessary nomination through any present member. The following patent agents are already members of the Society, and they would no doubt be glad to propose names of their fellow patent agents on application:—

Atkinson Adam, W. H. Ballantyne, George Barker, Griffith Brewer, Dugald Clerk, T. W. Rogers, W. P. Thompson.



THE DUBLIN-BELFAST AEROPLANE CONTEST.—Mr. J. Valentine flying over the grand stand, Leopardstown racecourse, Dublin, on his 50-h.p. Deperdussin.