



FLIGHT

First Aero Weekly in the World.

Founder and Editor: STANLEY SPOONER.

A Journal devoted to the Interests, Practice, and Progress of Aerial Locomotion and Transport.

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE ROYAL AERO CLUB OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

No. 273. (No. 12, Vol. VI.)

MARCH 21, 1914.

[Registered at the G.P.O.] [Weekly, Price 3d.
as a Newspaper. Post Free, 3½d.]

Flight.

Editorial Office: 44, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, LONDON, W.C.

Telegrams: Truditur, Westrand, London. Telephone: Gerrard 1828.

Annual Subscription Rates, Post Free.

United Kingdom ... 15s. 6d. Abroad 20s. 6d.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Editorial Comment:	
A Question of Responsibility	287
Mr. Churchill on Naval Aviation	288
Men of Moment in the World of Flight: The Marquess of Tullibardine ..	289
Flying at Hendon	290
The Navy Estimates	292
Olympia:	
The Exhibits	294
More Engines at Olympia	310
The Inaugural Luncheon at Olympia	312
Royal Aero Club. Official Notices	314
From the British Flying Grounds	315
Lessons Accidents have Taught. By Col. H. C. L. Holden, C.B. ...	316
Some Accessories at Olympia	318
Foreign Aircraft News	320
Models. Edited by V. E. Johnson, M.A.	321
Correspondence... ..	322

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

A Question of Responsibility. We had hoped that the Secretary of State for War would have made some sort of statement with regard to recent accidents in the R.F.C., and particularly that one by which Capt. Allen and Lieut. Burroughs were killed, in time for us to have dealt with the official explanations regarding the responsibility for the condition of B.E. 204 at the time of the occurrence. At the time of writing, however, nothing whatever has transpired, save that it is intended to appoint a Court of Enquiry to deal with the matter. We must say that this is very far from satisfactory, in the light of the evidence given at the inquest, and more particularly with reference to the evidence and statement of Major Brooke-Popham. The facts as disclosed are that the accident was caused through the breaking of the rudder-bar. As to what caused the fracture, an official of the Royal Aircraft Factory said he found on examination that the rudder-bar had been filed at the spot where it was welded to the rudder, thus reducing its strength to a dangerous extent. It is thus quite clear that the initial cause of the deplorable occurrence which lost two gallant officers to the Service was neglect

on the part of someone amounting to great culpability, even verging on criminality. That is the very lightest term that can be applied to it. Major Brooke-Popham went even farther, when he said:—"There are three possible causes for the accident: First, the design of the machine may have been wrong, and the strains miscalculated. Second, the workman who did the job may, through ignorance or carelessness, have put in too weak a tube. Third, the rudder post may have been changed after reconstruction, and after it was handed over to the squadron. In any of these three cases there is evidence of criminal negligence. If it were done in my squadron, I am to blame. On the contrary, if the machine was handed over to me like this, and nothing was done in my squadron, I hold the officials of the Royal Aircraft Factory responsible."

At the present moment we are not concerned with the precise degree of culpability, or criminality, of the person to whose carelessness the accident was primarily due. That is a matter which might well be left over for future discussion, if and when the culprit is discovered. The astounding thing, however, is that it does not appear possible to trace the individual responsible! Whether the Court of Enquiry will succeed in eliciting the information we have no means of knowing in advance, though we are not at all hopeful in the recollection that when last year, Lieut. Arthur was killed at Montrose through a faulty repair to a wing-spar, it was found impossible to trace the responsibility down to its first incidence. In the present case, the coroner in summing up delivered himself of the significant remark that it was extremely doubtful if the person who filed the bar would ever be discovered!

Here is a deplorable, indeed a damnable state of things. A machine to which gallant officers have to trust their lives in the everyday course of their duty is repaired in a careless, incompetent manner which directly results in two of those officers losing their lives, and we have to be content with the hopelessly inept information that "it is impossible to discover the person who is guilty of—we had almost written murder. Can any more fatuous, more incompetent, more callously lame "explanation" be imagined? Is there no organisation in the Royal Aircraft Factory or in the R.F.C., no system of tracing what is done and by whom? It looks like it—very much like it. If we are right in our conclusion, and we see no way to any other, then the sooner our flying service is provided with a really competent