

while undertaking the trouble and that the money will be well spent, since it is as certain as that night follows day that in the future aerial navigation, which is dependent upon the evolution of the best types of aircraft, will be the principal means of rapid communication between the nations.

**Cranwell as a Flying School**

In the White Paper devoted to the Air Service Estimates there appeared an item of £300,000 for the construction and equipment of a school for the instruction of future flying officers. This is not at all to be confused with the estimates for the training establishment at Halton, near Tring, which is a centre to be devoted to training non-commissioned ranks. It has now been allowed to transpire that the flying officer of the peace-time Royal Air Force is to be trained at the great aviation station at Cranwell, which it may be remembered was one of the largest of the R.N.A.S. training grounds prior to the fusion of the two air services. Generally speaking, the announcement that a first instalment of £300,000 is to be expended on the conversion of the aerodrome and the replacing of temporary buildings with permanent structures, has been received by the Press with approval. Aviation during the War took a very firm hold of the popular imagination—as well it might, particularly in those parts of the country which were continually subjected to attack by the enemy's aircraft. Thus a wide realisation has resulted of the basic fact that it would be the falsest of false economy to stint the Air Force of the money necessary to maintain the lead in the air with which we finished the War. We have no desire to be accused of undue repetition of the conviction we hold, in common with all who know anything about the potentialities of aircraft in the next great war, that it is vital to our safety as a nation and as an Empire that we should be prepared and remain prepared for aught that might befall. Yet in this present connection it is necessary to point the moral that by spending this money now we are simply paying an insurance premium, and a very moderate one, for the sake of future security. We are to the full as anxious as any that true economy should be the order of the day, yet in this case we, as taxpayers no less than as advocates of aerial development, welcome the expenditure, and can only wish that the nation's finances permitted an even swifter progress than the limitations of the present year's Estimates will allow. What is being done at Cranwell and at Halton shows that there is at any rate a "certain liveliness" in the military branch of the Air Ministry, and that there is a decided inclination apparent to keep the Air Force up to the high standard of efficiency which obtained during the War.

**Wireless and Aircraft**

The experiments which have recently been carried out by the *Daily Mail* in long-distance wireless telephony are not only of surpassing interest from the point of view of the easy and certain circulation of news, but they open up a perfect vista of possibilities in many other directions. There is only one of these that directly concerns us at the moment, and that is the application of this latest development of modern science to the purposes of aerial navigation. It has been an open secret for a long time that the wireless telephone was used with

considerable success during the War, but little as we heard of its possibilities then, we have not been vouchsafed very much more since, owing to the monopoly of the Post Office and the reluctance of the postal authorities to grant licences for the transmission of news by wireless telegraph or teleph one. It is easy enough now to get permission to install a receiving set, but sending is quite another matter. In the case of the *Daily Mail* experiments, the licence given by the Postmaster-General limited them to a duration of twenty minutes. Not the least interesting part of the experiment was a conversation with the passengers in a D.H. 6 flying over the Thames, which was quite successful.

The main thing which seems to us to fall to be discussed is this question of the Post Office monopoly of all methods of news transmission. It seems obvious that if aerial navigation is to depend upon the use of directional wireless, this monopoly will have to go when the time arrives that it has come to anything approaching a high state of development. It is not because we have any hostility to the Post Office, or that we fail to realise how important it has been from the point of view of the public that the State should have a monopoly of the mails and the telegraphs. It would never have done to have left these to the chaotic conditions which obtained when the mails were carried by private contractors, responsible to no one but themselves for the safety of important documents and correspondence. Nor could the telegraphs have been developed by private enterprise as they have been by the State. It might be argued that in the administration of the telephones the Post Office has not shown conspicuous ability or foresight, but in justice to the department, it must not be forgotten that the circumstances under which the State took over the telephone enterprise were such as to make it very certain that the latter was not all it would have been had the National Company not been working with the knowledge that at the end of a particular term the Post Office would inevitably assume control.

The development of wireless, however, puts an entirely new complexion on matters, and we cannot see how the Post Office can hope to retain a monopoly and refuse licences to operate. After all, the Post Office as a Department of State exists for the general convenience of the public. Up to the present, its monopoly has certainly operated for that convenience, but the moment a new set of conditions arises in which monopoly militates against the best interests of the community, it is perfectly obvious that the monopoly must go. We submit that such a new set of conditions is at hand, even if it has not already arisen, and that the time is here when the question of a retention of a monopoly in wireless transmission must be very seriously considered with a view to its removal, or at least its very drastic modification. Aviation and wireless are naturally allied, and *must* progress side by side.

**The War Museum**

The War Museum at the Crystal Palace, which His Majesty will open in state on Wednesday of next week, will necessarily be of extraordinary interest to everybody, whether or not the individual may have been concerned in the Great Adventure, and we doubt not will be visited by all who have or can make an opportunity. It has been a good thought of the Government to collect together