

# FLIGHT

*The*  
**AIRCRAFT  
ENGINEER  
&  
AIRSHIPS**

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**Founder and Editor: STANLEY SPOONER**

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT



ELSEWHERE in this issue we publish in full the report of the Court of Enquiry appointed by the Air Council to investigate the circumstances which led to the loss of "R.38" on August 24, 1921. Certain criticisms of the Admiralty are made in the Air Council's statement on the report, and the Admiralty are conducting a full investigation the results of which are to be published in due course.

### Loss of "R. 38."

Also the Aeronautical Research Committee has already begun an investigation into such points as are not covered by the report of the Court of Enquiry.

Thus at the present moment all that can be definitely stated is that the sequence of events was as indicated in the report. The question of why the girders broke and the facts relating to the design and construction of the airship still have to be settled, and we prefer to refrain from further comment on that side of the affair until such time as the Aeronautical Research Committee and the Admiralty have had an opportunity of making their reports.

In the meantime, the Court of Enquiry appears to have come to the conclusion that, once the airship was broken, the fire was caused by a spark from electric leads which became fractured in the immediate vicinity of a similar fracture in the petrol mains. Thus those who have long held—and among them are the majority of airship experts—that the greatest fire danger is from the petrol and not from the hydrogen, appear to have been vindicated. There has been a good deal of talk about helium, and the assertion has been made that, unless this or a similar non-inflammable gas becomes available, airships will always suffer from the danger of fire. In this case the fire was not caused by the hydrogen, but by the petrol, and it is very much open to doubt whether had no petrol main broken, the fire would have started when the ship broke. The report appears to us to bear out those who hold that in order to make safe airship travel, rather than hunt for an elusive non-inflammable gas which may elude us for years, we should commence really serious research into the possibilities of using a heavy oil engine in place of the petrol engine. The Diesel or semi-Diesel type has much to recommend it, and many experienced and qualified engineers hold that the type is imme-

### DIARY OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

*Club Secretaries and others desirous of announcing the dates of important fixtures are invited to send particulars for inclusion in the following list:*

- Oct. 13 .... Lecture, "A Comparison of Different Types of Aerofoils," by T. A. Kirkup, before R.Ae.S.
- Oct. 20 .... Lecture, "The Langley Machine and the Hammondsport Trials," by Griffith Brewer, before R.Ae.S.
- Oct. 22-30 Aero Exhibition, Prague
- Nov. 3 .... Pulitzer Trophy Race.
- Nov. 3 .... Lecture, "Manœuvres of Getting Off and Landing," by Sq.-Ldr. R. M. Hill, before R.Ae.S.
- Nov. 12-27 Paris Aero Salon
- Nov. 15-26 International Air Navigation Congress (Paris)
- Nov. 17 .... Lecture, "Requirements and Difficulties of Air Transport," by Col. F. Searle, before R.Ae.S.
- Dec. 1 .... Lecture, "Design of a Commercial Aeroplane," by Capt. G. de Havilland, before R.Ae.S.
- Dec. 15 .... Lecture, "Development of the Fighting Aeroplane," by Capt. F. M. Green, before R.Ae.S.
- 1922.
- Jan. 5 .... Lecture, "Specialised Aircraft," by Wing-Com. W. D. Beatty, before R.Ae.S.
- Jan. 19 .... Lecture, "Aeroplane Installation," by Brig.-Gen. R. K. Bagnall-Wild, before R.Ae.S.