FLIGHT

THE "SCHOETTLER I" BIPLANE

A Successful Chinese-Built Aeroplane

WE have just received the accompanying illustrations and a few brief particulars of what is claimed to be the first successful aeroplane built in China. Whilst much has been written about aviation and its progress in China, so far little or nothing has been heard about the construction of aeroplanes in this ancient land of the East, and it is only just recently that reports appeared in local newspapers telling of the tests at the Lunghwa Aerodrome of the machine under review

A CHINESE-BUILT AEROPLANE: A three-quarter front view of the "Schoettler I" biplane, fitted with a 160 h.p. Mercédès engine. This machine was built and flown at the Lunghwa Aerodrome, China, during the summer of this year.

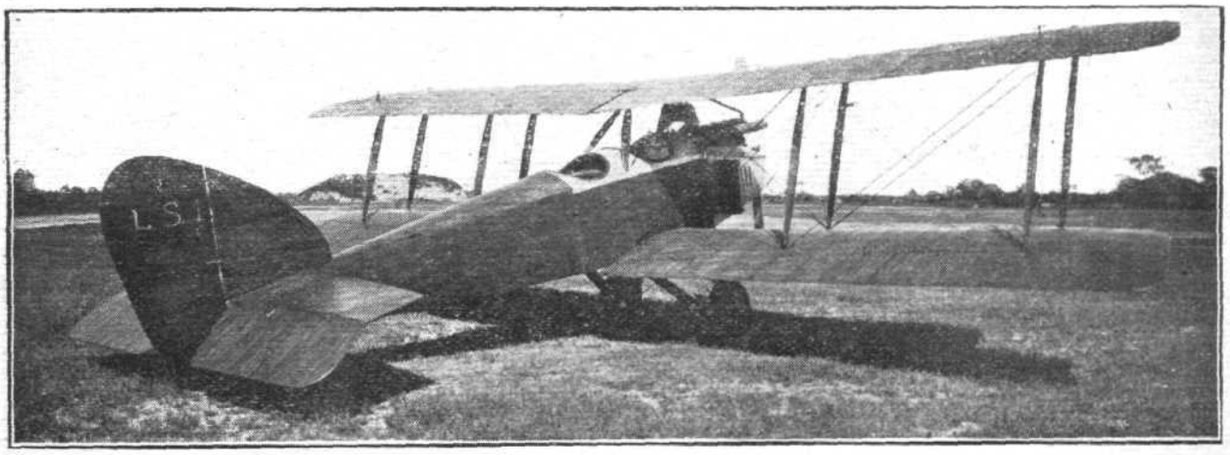
As a matter of fact, several attempts have been made at building aeroplanes in China, but without, it would seem, satisfactory results. Perhaps the principal reasons for this state of affairs have been lack of suitable raw materials, want of skilled workmen, and the restrictions placed upon the import of such materials to be used for the manufacture of aeroplanes. In consideration of the above-mentioned points aeroplane construction in China was considered an impossibility amongst foreign experts, but if some of them could see the work done at the Lunghwa Aerodrome during the past sixteen months they would give a different opinion.

The first machine—of a series to be completed soon—to be produced at this aerodrome is a two-seater tractor biplane, fitted with a 160 h.p. Mercédès water-cooled engine, has been completed. This machine has been designed and built by F. L. Schoettler, a German engineer, and it is known as the "Schoettler I."

The work of construction has been done without any of the modern machinery with which foreign aircraft works are equipped. Every part had to be made by hand from the raw material, without trained workmen, and in an open workshop. The latter, in fact, was little better than a matshed, offering but poor protection from the by no means favourable climatic conditions peculiar to China.

Considerable assistance in the construction of this machine, however, was obtained from Messrs. F. A. Welti and Son, of London, who supplied many of the important materials—such as instruments from S. Smith and Sons; dope from Titanine Ltd.; and wheels from Palmer Tyre, Ltd. The engine, instruments and wheels were the only "ready-made" items imported from Europe, everything else having been made in China.

From this it will be gathered that aeroplane building in China, although no longer an impossibility, would be—owing to the small number of skilled workmen available to assist the foreign engineer to bring out the finished product—a far from simple proposition, calling for a plentiful supply of brains and energy in order to carry on under the present conditions.



A three-quarter rear view of the "Schoettler I" biplane.

The work at Lunghwa will be the first step and the trial for greater schemes. Aviation, no doubt, will take one of the most important places later on amongst the means of communications in China, because it can be inaugurated with less money than that necessary for the building of long-distance roads and railways, and there is a larger field for aviation in