

FLIGHT

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EDITORIAL COMMENT.



ORTUNATELY it is extremely rare that one has, in this country, to record an aeroplane accident of so serious a character as that which occurred on December 24 near Croydon, and in which eight people lost their lives. The tragedy is made all the more sad by the fact of its occurrence so close to

Christmas, almost on Christmas Eve, in fact, the passengers being on their way to spend the Yuletide on the Continent, and little dreaming, when they emplaned a few minutes earlier, of the sad fate which awaited them. To their relatives who remain, in a small measure, the universal sympathy which has been extended may help to soften the grief which the swift calamity has called forth.

The Croydon Accident

With regard to the accident itself, there is, at present, little light thrown upon the initial cause of the crash, the inquest having been adjourned until January 9. Of the ultimate cause there does not seem to be much doubt. If the statement of eye-witnesses be accepted, the machine was seen to nose-dive to the ground, and then to catch fire. There is usually only one cause of a machine nose-diving near the ground, *i.e.* loss of flying speed and stalling. At present, as we have said, insufficient evidence exists upon which to base any clear opinion, and owing to the machine catching fire it seems doubtful whether such evidence will be available, but unless any part in the control system of the machine broke—an extremely unlikely occurrence under the very rigid system of inspection in force on the airways—it seems reasonable to suppose that the machine stalled when too near the ground to enable it to be righted.

As to the probable initial causes leading to the accident, there are two theories being advanced in aviation circles. One is that the engine began to fail, for some reason unknown, shortly after the machine left the aerodrome, and that the pilot attempted to turn back, while the second is that the machine was climbing slowly but got into a down-current which caused it to lose height and ultimately strike the ground. Both explanations sound feasible enough, but which is the correct one? If either is, it is not, in any case, possible to say.

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:—

1925	
Jan. 9	Mr. R. J. Parrott, Hons. Member: "The History and Evolution of the Avro Training Machine," before I.Ae.E.
Jan. 23	Lieut. N. A. Olechnovitch, Member: "A Few Experiments with Shock-Absorbing Hulls for Flying Boats," before I.Ae.E.
Feb. 5	Air Commodore C. R. Samson, C.M.G., D.S.O., A.F.C., A.F.R.Ae.S.: "The Operation of Flying Boats in the Mediterranean," before R.Ae.S.
Feb. 6	Professor E. G. Coker, D.Sc., F.R.S.: "Photo-Elastic Methods of Measuring Stress," before I.Ae.E.
Feb. 19	Major R. V. Southwell, A.F.R.Ae.S. (Superintendent, Aerodynamics Department, National Physical Laboratory): (Title to be announced later), before R.Ae.S.
Feb. 20	Mr. H. L. J. Hinkler: "Flying in Australia," before I.Ae.E.
Mar. 5	Lieut.-Col. C. B. Heald, C.B.E. (Medical Adviser to the Director of Civil Aviation, Air Ministry): "Some Medical Aspects of Air Transport," before R.Ae.S.
Mar. 6	M. E. Dewoitine: "The Advantages of Metal Construction," before I.Ae.E.