



IN PARLIAMENT

Air Ministry Offices

Captain GARRO-JONES, on July 20, asked the Secretary of State for Air whether it is proposed to move a portion of the Air Ministry from Kingsway to Whitehall; what premises they propose to occupy; and what will be the advantage of this duplication of offices?

The Under-Secretary of State for Air (Major Sir Philip Sassoon): Offices in Gwydyr House, Whitehall, have lately been taken over by the Secretary of State and myself with our personal staffs, the object in view being proximity to the Houses of Parliament and other Ministers. The Directorate of Civil Aviation has also moved to Gwydyr House; but the accommodation available there is insufficient to permit of any other considerable section of the Ministry being removed from the existing offices in Kingsway.

Captain Garro-Jones: Is it intended that the rest of the Air Ministry should be removed to the same premises at present or at some future time, and if the House refuses the money required to erect the new building will the hon. Baronet give authority to go back to Kingsway?

Sir P. Sassoon: That is a hypothetical question which I cannot be expected to answer, but as the hon. Member has referred to the erection of new buildings I should say that the Air Ministry at present is occupying premises under a very expensive lease, and both for reasons of economy as well as of convenience it may be found desirable to find other accommodation.

Aircraft Construction and Germany

LIEUT.-COLONEL SIR FREDERICK HALL asked the Secretary of State for Air whether his attention has been called to the fact that a Dutch company of aeroplane constructors have recently received an order for a thousand full-strength aeroplanes, which are being paid for through a German bank; if he can state what is the number of such machines which are now under German ownership and control, although not actually constructed in that country; and whether, in view of the importance of the matter, the Allies have made any representations to the German Government on the subject?

Sir P. Sassoon: As regards the first part of the question, I understand that there have been rumours on the subject, but I cannot accept any responsibility for their accuracy. As regards the second part of the question I have no information, and the third part does not, therefore arise.

Sir F. Hall: Have the Air Ministry taken any steps to find out from the Dutch manufacturers whether there is any truth in the suggestion or the rumour to which the question refers?

Sir P. Sassoon: Yes, we have taken steps to find out, and we have no information to the effect that Germany is engaged in the manner suggested in this question. If the hon. and gallant Member has any information to give to us we shall be very glad to receive it.

Sir F. Hall: Is a Dutch company manufacturing aeroplanes for Germany or is it not?

Sir P. Sassoon: The suggestion in the question is that Germany is trying to evade her obligations under the Treaty. We have no information about that.

Sir F. Hall: On a point of Order. In my question there is no suggestion as to the evasion of obligation on the part of Germany. Can I have an answer to the important question which is asked?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. and gallant Member asks the Secretary of State for Air, "Whether his attention has been called to the fact"—I presume that he has satisfied himself that it was a fact before putting down the question, and perhaps he will supply the Ministry with what is his evidence.

Captain Benn: May I ask the hon. Baronet for an explanation of what a full-strength aeroplane is?

Mr. Speaker: Not now—in private.

Air Mails

COLONEL DAY, on July 21, asked the Postmaster-General if he will consider causing facilities for all air-mail rates to be more extensively advertised than at present, and will be consider the advisability of supplying air stamps

to the values of 2d., 3d. and 4d., such issues to be valid for air-mail letters only?

Sir W. Mitchell-Thomson: The existing arrangements for giving publicity to the facilities afforded by air mails will shortly be supplemented by a poster in colour. I shall be glad to consider any suggestion which the hon. member may care to send me. The blue labels issued free of charge are found to be much more suitable for the purpose of distinguishing letters intended for conveyance by air than a special postage stamp.

Ministry of Air Offices

MR. BRIGGS asked the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, the annual rental of Adastral House, Kingsway, occupied by the Ministry of Air, and the length of its lease; and if he will consider the removal of the Ministry to less expensive but equally suitable premises at an early date?

Mr. Locker-Lampson: The rent of Adastral House is £40,000 per annum. The lease is one of 21 years from March 25, 1919. There is no building available in a suitable position in which sufficient accommodation for the Air Ministry would be afforded.

Airship Service

MR. VIANT, on July 22, asked the Secretary of State for Air (1) what is the estimated cost of the repairs to the R.33; when will this airship be ready to continue her experimental flights; when will the experts be able to decide upon the improvements to be embodied in the repairs to the mooring mast at Pulham; and when will the mast be ready for use;

(2) when the completion of the mooring mast and air station, including hydrogen producing plant, at Ismailia is expected; when will the R.36 be ready for the experimental service to Egypt; and what is the estimated cost of re-conditioning the R.36 for this service?

Sir P. Sassoon: I will answer the hon. member's questions with regard to the R.33 and R.36 together, a differentiation of cost between the two airships being extremely difficult, both because they have been under repair simultaneously and because the accident to the R.33 has affected the work on the R.36. The cost of the direct labour and material for the repair of both the airships is estimated at £32,000, to which must be added the cost of a complete set of gas bags, namely, £24,000; this was necessary because only one set of serviceable gas bags could be made available out of those originally in the two airships. The repair to R.33, which has involved practically a re-design of the forepart of the airship, should be completed by the middle of September, and the airship should be fully inflated and ready for flight three weeks from that date. The details of the repairs to the mooring mast at Pulham will be completed very shortly and the mast should be ready for use at the end of September. In view of the delays in the original programme that have been caused by the accident to the R.33, it is not now proposed to carry out the mooring mast and other flying trials in Egypt before the late spring or early summer of 1926, by which time both the base at Ismailia and the repair of R.36 should have been completed.

Mr. Viant asked whether, in view of the fact that the nearest mooring mast, at Ismailia, is approximately 1,900 miles away, and the safety and reliability of airships for commercial purposes has not yet been proved, it is intended to try out the vessels which are intended for this service regularly on a route in this country, where mooring masts are already in existence, before attempting the Egyptian service?

Sir P. Sassoon: The hon. member is apparently under a misapprehension, there being no intention to establish a State airship service to Egypt. I may say, however, that, in view of the fact that the two new airships are to be of much larger dimensions than any hitherto built, an exhaustive programme of research and experiment is being carried out in connection with their construction.

NEW PARCEL AIR MAIL TO SWITZERLAND

THE Postmaster-General announces that, starting from July 28, a new air parcel service to Switzerland was inaugurated. Parcels intended for transmission by this service will be forwarded from London, usually on the morning after posting, by direct aeroplane each weekday to Bale or Zurich (*i.e.*, by the route numbered 2 on page 2 of the Air Mail leaflet of June, 1925), and should normally be delivered at any address in Switzerland on the second or third day after posting, that is to say, two or three days earlier than if sent all the way by ordinary service.

The special fee payable, inclusive of inland as well as air conveyance (but exclusive of express delivery, the charge for which is 6d. per parcel), is as follows:—

For a parcel weighing up to 2 lb., 3s. 0d.; 2-7 lb., 7s. 6d.; 7-11 lb., 11s. 6d. For the present no parcel weighing over 11 lb. will be accepted, and there will be no facilities for insurance, payment of cash on delivery, or payment by the sender of customs duty. For customs clearance at the aerodrome at Bale or Zurich, as the case may be, and for subsequent delivery at the place of address, an inclusive charge of 1 franc 30 centimes will be collected from the addressee.

Air parcels can be posted at any district or branch Post Office in London, and at any Head Post Office (and, in some cases, at one or more subordinate offices also) in the provinces.

Except as shown above, the regulations of the ordinary parcel post to Switzerland will apply. The Customs declarations and despatch note relative to an air parcel for Switzerland should be made out with special care and accuracy in order that there may be no avoidable delay in delivery of the parcel after it has reached that country. The sender must see that, either before or at the time of posting, an air mail label is carefully affixed to the parcel close to the address where it will not easily be overlooked.

For information as to the latest time at which a parcel may be posted at a given Post Office for air transmission to Switzerland next day, enquiry should be made of the local head Post Office.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON AND AERONAUTICS

IT may not, perhaps, be generally known that the subject of aeronautics has for some years past formed an important item on the "programme" at East London College (University of London). In fact, for the third successive year an optional paper on aeronautical work has been set for the B.Sc. degree of the University of London—although not everyone would recognise this, perhaps, under its title of "Mechanics of Fluids, Section C"! A glance at the questions, or syllabus, however, shows that this aeronautical section is practically identical with that adopted by the Royal Aeronautical Society for their examinations in aerodynamics. We are assured by the Aeronautical Section of East London College that this section has proved very successful, and that a candidate following a reasonable course of reading can do just as well in aerodynamics as in the other papers he must take. It may be of interest to note that this College possesses an excellent aeronautical laboratory with first-rate equipment, including four-foot and other wind channels, examples of full-scale aircraft, parts of engines, &c. Dr. N. A. V. Piercy, who is in charge of the Aeronautical Laboratory informs us that the College is not endowed in the subject of aeronautics, and has put up a great fight, at considerable financial loss, for the cause of the undergraduate training in this branch of engineering. However, their efforts have met with every success, and several students have secured positions in technical aeronautics—indeed, it has not been possible to meet the demand. Dr. Piercy, nevertheless, considers that a much greater number of engineering students could profitably give attention to aerodynamics, to the exclusion of some more specialised subject less likely to be of use to them and of less educational value—for there appears to be a steady demand in the industry for students satisfactorily completing a primary training in aeronautical engineering. Readers of FLIGHT, therefore who may be interested in this matter can obtain full particulars on applying to the East London College, Mile End Road, E.1, or to Dr. N. A. V. Piercy, 3, King's Bench Walk, Temple, E.C.4.