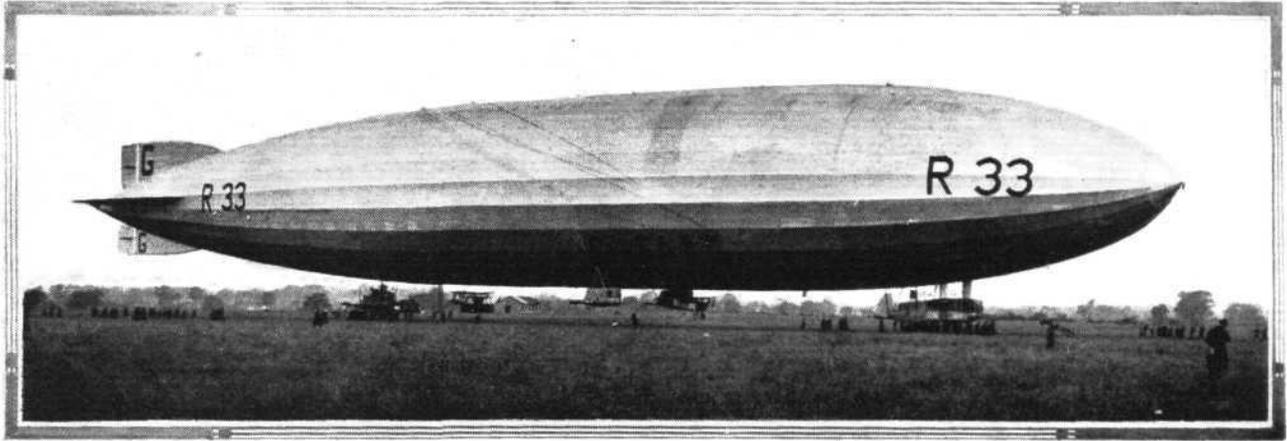


R.33 AS AIRCRAFT CARRIER

On October 21 last the British rigid airship R.33 carried out some further tests in connection with the airship development programme. The main feature of these tests, which were made at Pulham airship station, consisted in some further experiments in launching aeroplanes from the airship during flight. Previous experiments in this direction, it will be remembered, were carried out with a single D.H.53 light monoplane, which, piloted by Sq.-Ldr. Rollo Haig, was successfully launched from, and re-attached to, the R.33.

itself, as regards the effect of the sudden release of a comparatively heavy load. In this connection it should be noted that each of the Gloster "Grebes" weighed over a ton, and that each represented about 40,000 cub. ft., out of the total 2,000,000 cub. ft. of gas required by R.33, so that it was quite conceivable that the sudden extra lift thus gained by the airship, together with the release of load from a point forward, or aft, of the airship's centre of gravity, would have considerable disturbing effect upon the airship's trim. As a



[“FLIGHT” Photograph

H.M. AIR AIRCRAFT CARRIER, R.33: The British rigid airship, R.33, with two Gloster "Grebes" attached, just before ascending from Pulham on October 21.

This time, however, the experiment was developed still further, and instead of carrying one light 'plane, the R.33 ascended with two standard Gloster "Grebe" single-seater fighters (Armstrong-Siddeley "Jaguars") slung beneath her hull.

One of these machines was "released" at Pulham and the other at Cardington, where R.33 proceeded shortly after. The objects of the present experiment were: firstly, to demonstrate the possibility of employing the airship as an aircraft carrier under more practical and useful conditions than hitherto—and the experiment has certainly shown that it should be quite feasible for a number of up-to-date aircraft to be transported speedily to distant parts and successfully launched. Secondly, it also served as a test of the airship

matter of fact, when the first "Grebe" cast off, R.33 proceeded on her way entirely unperturbed—at least, not appreciably so, to those watching on the ground below.

After a "retirement" of about a year, R.33 emerged from her shed at Pulham shortly before 9 a.m. on Thursday last, weather conditions at the time being good. Maj. G. H. Scott was in command, with Sq.-Ldr. R. Booth—who accompanied R.33 on her "night out" last year—as second in command, Capt. W. Meager third officer, and Flight-Lieut. Johnston as navigator. On board were also Group-Capt. P. F. M. Fellowes, Director of Airship Development, Wing-Comdr. W. L. Welsh, of the Flying Operations Section, Air Ministry, and Mr. W. W. Smith, of the Air Defence Experimental Establishment, Biggin Hill (in charge of acoustica



[“FLIGHT” Photograph

“LIGHTER-HEAVIER-THAN-AIR”: A close-up of the R.33 (or part of same) and the two Gloster "Grebes." Each of the latter weighed over a ton, and were successfully launched from about 2,000 ft.