



R.101

AIRSHIPS are materialising at last. After unforeseen delays in construction, the two 5,000,000 cub. ft. rigids are now completed, and one has passed its "shed trials," while the other is expected to do so during the next week or so. On Wednesday of last week representatives of the Press were permitted to visit the Royal Airship Works at Cardington, Bedfordshire, to inspect the Government airship R.101, and it is likely that the other large airship, R.100, designed and built by the Airship Guarantee Co. at Howden, Yorkshire, will be ready for inspection in a couple of weeks or so. After mooring tests at the mast at Cardington the airships will proceed, as soon as weather permits, to do their home trial flights, R.101 first and R.100 afterwards.

Although information concerning R.101 has been published in *FLIGHT* from time to time, in the form of *résumés* of lectures, original articles, etc., it is thought that readers will like to have collected in one issue the main data and such information as can be given concerning the airship, and consequently we give below a description of R.101, together with a brief summary of the history of the airship

programme which has now resulted in the completion of two rigid airships, one of which, the R.100, has been designed and built by private enterprise (the Airship Guarantee Co.), and the other, R.101, partly by the State as represented by the Air Ministry, and the Royal Airship Works, and partly by private firms, notably Boulton & Paul, Ltd. Both airships are, of course, produced to the order of the Air Ministry.

After some five years of vacillation, during which we could not make up our minds about airships, first thinking we wanted them and then thinking we didn't, deciding again that we did, and changing our mind and concluding, on the alleged score of economy, that we would be compelled to abandon airships altogether, a definite airship development policy was established in 1924, under the Labour Government then in office. The revival of airships was in a very large measure due to Commander Burney, who at one time was almost a voice crying in the wilderness, but who never lost faith, and whose efforts were at long last rewarded—chiefly, we imagine, because of the enthusiasm of Lord Thomson, who was Air Minister in the 1924 Labour Government, and