

## IN PARLIAMENT

### Long-Distance Flight Disaster

SIR SAMUEL HOARE, on December 19, asked the Under-Secretary of State for Air whether he could give the House any information with reference to the accident to the long-distance flight machine and the death of the two pilots?

Mr. Montague: I am not yet in a position to add materially to the information which has already been made public about this most regrettable disaster. The reports so far received from His Majesty's Consul-General in Tunis merely state that the machine crashed in the hills some 30 miles south of Tunis, the weather at the time being both cloudy and stormy, and that Sqdn.-Ldr. Jones-Williams and Flight Lieut. Jenkins were both killed. A military guard has been placed over the machine and the Consul-General left at dawn this morning for the scene of the accident with a view to obtaining the fullest possible information and bringing the bodies of the dead officers to the Military Hospital in Tunis.

The Air Ministry have already despatched a technical officer to Tunis, in order that the fullest expert inquiry practicable may be made on the spot. Pending receipt of his report no cause can be assigned to the accident. I should like to add that the responsible French authorities have given the greatest possible assistance. I am sure the whole House will join with me in deploring the loss of the lives of two gallant officers of such outstanding promise and in conveying to their relatives an expression of our most profound sympathy.

### England-India Air Mail

MR. MONTAGUE, in reply to Capt. Balfour said between the opening of the England-India air mail service on March 31, 1929, and November 30, 1929, the number of completed flights to Karachi was 35 and from Karachi 31. Up to October 31, the mail arrived after the schedule date on three occasions at Karachi, and on three occasions at Croydon, and in addition it was lost on the occasion of the two accidents, at Jask outwards and near Spezia homewards. The service has throughout been organised on a basis of the carriage of mails by train for the stage between Basle and Genoa. Since November 1, however, largely owing to climatic conditions on the alternative mid-European route, temporarily operated from that date, the air mail has been carried on all occasions for longer stages by train, and on some also by sea, and it has not in consequence been possible to adhere to a completely regular schedule.

### Air Forces : Great Britain and United States

MR. MONTAGUE on December 23, in reply to Sir R. Gower, said the first-line strength of the Royal Air Force at the present time is 772 aircraft. As regards America, the last edition of the Armaments Year Book of the League of Nations shows the first-line strength of the United States Army and Naval Air Forces as 857 aircraft in 1928, a number which is believed to have since risen to more than 900.

### Air-Post Stamps

ON December 24 the Postmaster-General (Mr. Lees-Smith), in reply to Mr. Everard, said: I have considered the adoption of a distinctive air-mail stamp, and in view of the inherent objections I have decided against its introduction.

Mr. Everard: Can the Parliamentary Secretary say how it is that the Dominions are able to adopt an air mail stamp, and why it is not possible in this country?

Mr. Lees-Smith: The hon. Member is mistaken; not all the Dominions have adopted the air mail stamp, and the reports which we have investigated do not encourage us to repeat the experiment.

### Royal Air Force Aircraft

IN reply to Captain H. Balfour, Mr. Montague said a certain number of D.H. 9a and Bristol Fighter aircraft are still in use, but both types have been so continuously developed and improved that they now differ greatly from the war-time aircraft of the same names. It is hoped to substitute new types of aircraft for all D.H.9a's by the end of 1930, and for all Bristol Fighters by the end of 1932.

### Women's Royal Air Force and Miss Douglas-Pennant

MR. W. J. BROWN, on December 24, raised the question of the dismissal of Miss Douglas-Pennant from the Air Ministry in 1918, and asked for an explanation of the circumstances.

Sir William Jowitt (Attorney-General), during a lengthy reply, said they had to throw their minds back to August, 1918, when the war was still in a not uncritical phase. The number of men available for enlistment in the R.A.F. was strictly limited, and it was necessary to supplement them as far as possible by women.

Unfortunately the organisation of the "W.R.A.F.'s" was wholly unsatisfactory. Lord Weir was then Secretary for Air, and there was not a shadow of doubt that he changed his mind. There was no doubt that on August 7 an answer was given that Miss Douglas-Pennant was giving every satisfaction, but between that date and August 2 Sir Auckland Geddes had caused to be written a letter to Lord Weir, which called attention to the thoroughly bad organisation of the Women's Royal Air Force. That letter called attention to the fact that immediate steps must be taken to remedy the organisation, and Lord Weir had to consider the best step to be taken, and what person was the best to take those steps.

On August 25 he made up his mind to replace Miss Douglas-Pennant as head of the W.R.A.F. by somebody else, and when he came to that decision he had seen nobody and had seen no document except from Sir Auckland Geddes. He subsequently, rightly or wrongly, came to the conclusion that Miss Douglas-Pennant was not the best person fitted for that particular job at that particular time, and, acting on that conclusion, he did that which any honest man would have done—took steps to displace her. He (Sir William Jowitt) agreed that the manner of her discharge was one of the greatest regret, and for that Lord Weir apologised.

"It was made perfectly plain to Miss Douglas-Pennant," he proceeded, "that there is not, there never has been, the smallest ground for suggesting that Miss Douglas-Pennant was guilty of any kind of moral turpitude or moral fault or moral obliquity, or that she was at any time doing any other than the best she could in the interests of the W.R.A.F. Let it be equally plainly understood that there is no charge made whatever against Miss Douglas-Pennant's general efficiency. Her long record of honourable public service shows she was a most efficient person in organisation in other respects."

Charges had been made of the most serious and grave nature. The committee of investigation came unanimously to the conclusion that there was no substance in the charges; that the charges ought never to have been made, and they expressed their regret that they had been made.

He had come to the conclusion that it would be grossly unjust to other people who were closely concerned, and who had had charges made against them, if the matter were to be reopened. These scandals would be raked over again although these people had vindicated themselves.

There was not an honest person in the world who should have any hesitation in being proud to know a woman such as Miss Douglas-Pennant. She should rest content with his statement that there had never been the slightest charge against her honour.

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

*Illustrated Calendar for 1930: "Outward Bound" Blackburn "Nile."* The Blackburn Aeroplane and Motor Co., Ltd., Amberley House, Norfolk Street, London, W.C.2.

*The Nickel Bulletin.* Nov., 1929. Vol. 2. No. 5. The Mond Nickel Co., Ltd., Imperial Chemical House, Millbank, S.W.1.

*Reminders for Company Secretaries.* By Herbert W. Jordan. Jordan and Sons, Ltd., 116-118, Chancery Lane, W.C.2. Price 2s. 6d. By post 2s. 9d.

*Aeronautical Research Committee Reports and Memoranda: No. 1233 (Ae. 388).*—The Graphical and Analytical Determination of Stresses in Single Span and Continuous Beams under End Compression and Lateral Load with Aviations in Shear, Distributed Load and Moment of Inertia. By H. B. Howard. June, 1928. Price 2s. H.M. Stationery Office, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

*The NAFT A.P.O.C. Magazine, Nov. 1929. Vol. V, No. 6.*—The Anglo-Persian Oil Co., Ltd., Britannic House, Finsbury Circus, E.C.2.

*The Countryman. Christmas Number. No. 4. Vol. III.* J. W. Robertson Scott, Idbury, Kingham, Oxford. Price 2s. 6d. Quarterly.

*The Dobbie-McInnes "Farnboro" Electric Indicator.* Dobbie McInnes and Clyde, Ltd., 57, Bothwell Street, Glasgow.

*Illustrated Calendar, 1930.* The Bristol Aeroplane Co., Ltd., Filton, Bristol.

*Aircraft Handbook.* By F. H. Colvin and H. F. Colvin. McGraw-Hill Publishing Co. Ltd., 6 and 8, Bouverie Street, E.C.4. Price 25s.

*All the World's Aircraft, 1929.* Edited by C. G. Grey. Founded in 1911 by Fred T. Jane. London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., Ltd. Price £2 2s. net.

*Instruction Manual for Users of the "Eagle" Aircraft Camera, R.A.F. Service Type F.8.* Williamson Manufacturing Co., Ltd., Litchfield Gardens, Willesden Green, London, N.W.10. Price 2s. 6d. net.

*The British Schneider Trophy Team, 1929.* Reproduction of a Painting by A. Coombe Richards. Issued jointly by the Supermarine Aviation Works, Ltd., Vickers (Aviation), Ltd., and Rolls-Royce, Ltd.



## AERONAUTICAL PATENT SPECIFICATIONS

*Abbreviations:* Cyl. = cylinder; i.c. = internal combustion; m. = motors. The numbers in brackets are those under which the Specifications will be printed and abridged, etc.)

### APPLIED FOR IN 1928

Published January 2, 1930

- 25,092. P. SCHLOVSKY. System of signalling in fog. (322,472.)
- 28,054. ARMSTRONG SIDDELEY MOTORS, LTD., F. R. SMITH and S. M. VIALE. Superchargers for i.c. engines. (322,570.)
- 37,594. G. H. DOWTY. Shock-absorbing and springing mechanisms applicable to aircraft. (322,657.)

### APPLIED FOR IN 1929

Published January 2, 1930

- 2,463. J. KSOLL. Aeroplane with supporting surface subdivided by gaps. (322,687.)
- 6,293. A. ROHRBACH. Seaplane floats and hulls. (306,903.)

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