

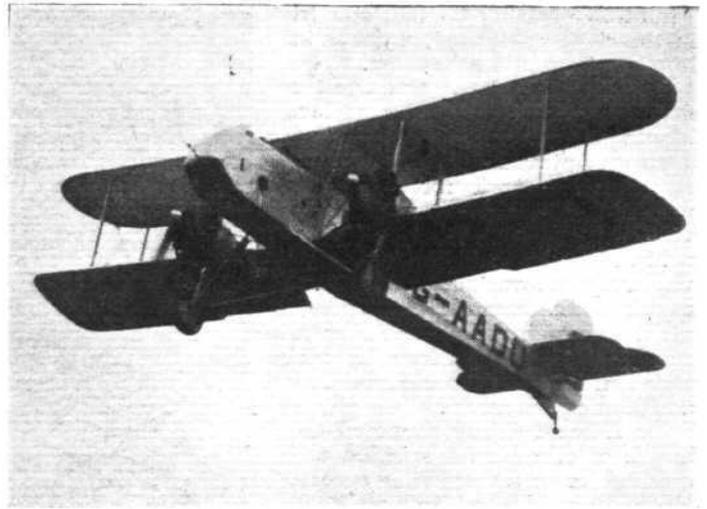
# THE GLOSTER SURVEY AEROPLANE

Flight by Lord Thomson

ON Saturday, January 25, the Gloster Survey Aeroplane—two Jupiters—was formally taken over by the Aircraft Operating Co. Ltd., to whose specifications it had been designed. On the initial flight at Heston, after the taking over of the machine, Lord Thomson and Mr. Montague, Secretary and Under-Secretary of State for Air, respectively, were passengers in the machine. On the second flight, Sir Edward Crowe, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., Comptroller General of the Department of Overseas Trade, and Sir Sefton Brancker were passengers.

Before the ceremony at Heston, Lord Thomson and Mr. Montague visited the laboratories and drawing offices of the Aircraft Operating Co. at Hendon. The original intention had been that they should fly across to Heston, but the weather was too foggy to make this advisable, so the journey was made by road. The distinguished visitors, among whom were Sir Cecil Bottomley, K.C.M.G., C.B., of the Colonial Office, and Colonel M. N. MacLeod, D.S.O., M.C., of the Air Survey Committee, War Office, were received by Mr. Alan Butler, Major Hemming, Major Mayo and Major Cochran-Patrick, D.S.O., M.C., of the Aircraft Operating Co. The Survey machine was piloted by Flight-Lieut. Saint, test pilot of the Gloster firm, and he handled her with very great skill. Though it is rather difficult to make one's voice heard in the cabin, the steadiness of the machine in the air is very marked, and the pilot put her from one manœuvre into another with absolute smoothness and freedom from jerking. It was extremely interesting to watch the left-hand turns with the starboard Jupiter throttled right down and only ticking over. She went about with a minimum of rudder and aileron. Her speed range was also very good. It was Sir Edward Crowe's first flight, and he said that he enjoyed the experience very much indeed.

After the flights the party was entertained to luncheon by the Gloster and Aircraft Operating Companies, with Mr. Butler in the chair. Proposing the health of the Air Minister, the chairman said that he looked on this occasion as the birth of a new industry. Lord Thomson and Mr. Montague had been the first passengers in the first aeroplane designed for aerial survey. He regarded co-operation between the Government and the industry as the way to commercial success. In the past it had been impossible to tender for the survey of vast impenetrable tracts because of the unreliability of the aeroplanes available. It was

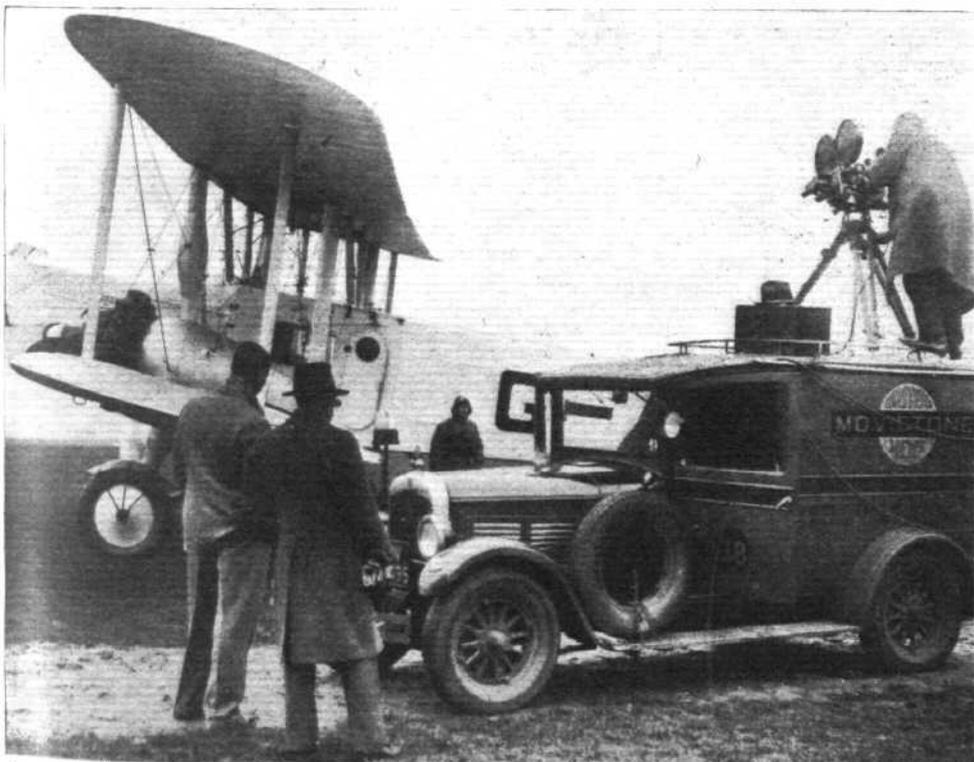


The Gloster Survey machine flying with starboard engine throttled right down, and propeller ticking slowly over.

also impossible to order a special machine without having contracts on hand. The Gloster firm had built this machine for them on very fair terms. When he spoke of the unreliability of aircraft, he considered this form of conveyance as reliable as any other; but they could not risk a forced landing in the bush from engine failure. This machine had played an important part in getting them the contract for the survey of 63,000 square miles in Northern Rhodesia. He congratulated Lord Thomson on the good example which he set by flying everywhere. Flying had introduced such a revolution in survey work, that they now ran the risk that their claims would not be taken seriously. But he had received a message from Lord Passfield, Secretary for the Colonies, in which he stated that their previous survey in Northern Rhodesia had given satisfaction to the Colonial Government. It was only by securing contracts for large areas that they were able to quote low rates, and he would like to suggest that the Air Ministry should help them in securing more large contracts.

Lord Thomson, in his reply, said that in flying he was only doing what every advanced person now does. He mentioned that on a recent flight to the Continent a small red-haired boy among the passengers had asked him: "Is this your first flight?" and then added, "It is my fifth. I always make Daddy send me this way." Lord Thomson said that air surveying was going to do a great deal for the development of the Empire. They would not be able to develop the Empire rapidly without more flying. He always impressed that point, whenever he had the chance, on every Colonial Governor or Premier of a Dominion. Of course, to a Secretary of State, a concern which did not ask for a subsidy was like a spring of water in the wilderness. He had been surprised at the low figure Mr. Butler quoted for each square mile surveyed. When he had been on a ground survey of the sources of the Niger, his mess bill alone had been as high as that figure per square mile surveyed. There was no difficulty in persuading intelligent people of the advantages of using aircraft. The difficulty was to convince the Press. However, he saw two journalists present who were highly intelligent people. (We shall not attempt to guess which two of the journalists present were thus distinguished by the Air Minister, though we may remark *en passant* that there were two representatives of FLIGHT present.—Ed.)

Lord Thomson ended by saying that the Air Ministry helped those who helped themselves. The



Lord Thomson gives his impressions of his flight to the microphone.