



AIR TRANSPORT

IRELAND AND AIR TRANSPORT

COLONEL CHARLES RUSSELL, the ex-Commander-in-Chief of the Irish Free State Army Air Corps, in a special interview to *FLIGHT* has given us his opinion of the delay in starting an Anglo-Irish air service and the lack of civil aviation generally in Ireland. The present position of flying in the Free State and Northern Ireland is exceedingly poor; civil aviation being represented only by the Irish Aero Club, which has its headquarters at Baldonnel aerodrome, a considerable distance out of Dublin, the membership is approximately 200, of which slightly less than half are pilot-members. Colonel Russell is the honorary instructor, and is assisted by his younger brother, Lieut. Russell. The machine owned by the club is a dual-controlled Avro, fitted with an Armstrong Siddeley Genet engine; they are fortunate, however, in having the use of two members' machines—another Avro and a D.H. Moth. No flying licences are granted at present in the Free State, as the Minister for Industry and Commerce, within whose province flying comes, has not yet applied to the Dail (Parliament) for the money necessary to establish the machinery required for their issue. Flyers who are trained by the I.A.C. have therefore to obtain their licences in England from the British Air Ministry. A flying club for Northern Ireland has been established at Belfast, but as yet it is purely "on paper," as it possesses neither machine nor aerodrome.

It was pointed out by Colonel Russell that at the present time only one-sixteenth of the Irish National Army vote is being devoted to military aviation, whereas in other countries the appropriation is about one-fifth. If an adequate allowance were made from this vote, civil aviation would benefit considerably by the forming of an Air Force Reserve such as exists in England to-day. It will be remembered that Sir Sefton Brancker had a similar experience in the early days of the R.A.F.

An air line between Dublin and London has been advocated for a long time, but up to now no definite action has been taken. Irish Airways, Ltd. are, however, trying to secure a subsidy from the Free State Government to get this service running; once started, it should not require a subsidy of more than £5,000 per annum, with gradual yearly decreases, providing that full pay-loads at £3 per passenger were obtained. This service could, said Colonel Russell, be run

with four machines, and be so arranged to link up with the Continental services at Croydon.

Dealing with the economics of the question, he was of the opinion that the line would be an even better paying proposition if the machines were started from Queenstown, which is an Atlantic liners' port of call, and flew to Dublin, then on to London, as this would enable a reasonable number of flying hours per trip to be obtained from both pilot and plane. Another route would be from Galway, also an Atlantic shipping port, to London via Dublin. At a later date, a flying-boat service from Queenstown to Cherbourg might be instituted. Dublin is in a remarkably good position to have a good airport, Phoenix Park, which is one of the largest parks in Europe, is within five minutes' journey from the business centre of the city and an excellent landing ground and airport could be made if Customs facilities were provided. The machines, however, would probably have to be housed elsewhere, as the ground is the property of the inhabitants of the City of Dublin.

Questioned on the practicability of the use of flying-boats from Dublin to Liverpool, Colonel Russell said that the distance was decidedly uneconomical for that type of machine, and the route was not a good one in any case; an experimental service between Belfast and Liverpool was tried some time ago, but the delays caused through fogs in the Mersey resulted in its being abandoned. Planes flying from Dublin to London could call at Chester to set down passengers for the north if required, but could not pick up others unless a special arrangement was made with Imperial Airways.

In twenty years, perhaps, trans-Atlantic services would be established, and Ireland, as the farthest point west on this side of the Atlantic, would no doubt be selected as a base, but if the Government of Ireland think that they can "sit on the fence" until these services become an accomplished fact, they will be making a very grave mistake, for others, more enterprising, will step in and seize on the opportunities offered. "The whole difficulty is that the Government does not realize that flying has grown out of the experimental stage and established itself as a rapid and efficient means of communication which is essential to the civilised world," was the summing up of the situation given by Colonel Russell.

Air Mail Propaganda

ALL who appreciate the importance of developing civil aviation in this country, and the Empire will have welcomed the Postmaster-General's Report showing the growth of air mail traffic in the quarter ended June, 1930, as compared with the corresponding period of 1929. The distribution of leaflets, giving particulars of the various air mail services in the post offices in London and the provinces, the recent inclusion of a panel of air mail labels in the 3s. books of postage stamps, and the installation of a number of the new blue air mail posting boxes are all excellent methods of advertising the air mail. But there is still room for considerable improvement in the education of the general public in the advantages of sending letters by air. The Civil Aviation Section of the London Chamber of Commerce has for the past year been constantly pressing for increased propaganda for the encouragement of a more general use of the air mail. Whilst effect has now been given to some of its proposals, it has at present been unable to persuade the Postmaster-General to utilise the stamp-cancellation dies for the purpose of advertising the air mail. This has proved a most effective method in Australia, France, Germany, and U.S.A., where slogans such as "Air Mail Saves Time" are employed. One is at a loss to understand why H.M. Post Office should find itself unable to utilise the postmark, which costs nothing, whilst spending money on advertising the service in other and possibly less effective ways. And, why not air mail stamps?

Night Air Mails to Berlin

THE Postmaster General announces that, as from July 28, the latest time of posting for the Night Air Mail Service from London to Cologne, Hanover and Berlin, will be 8 p.m. at the special Air Mail posting box at the General Post Office, and 6.45 p.m. to 7.15 p.m., according to the locality, at the other special Air Mail boxes in London. The latest time of posting elsewhere can be ascertained locally. The mails should reach Cologne and Hanover in time for the first delivery next morning, and Berlin in time for the second delivery. The charge will be 4d. for the first ounce and 3d. for each subsequent ounce, including postage and air fee.

Growing Air Traffic in America

THAT more and more people are using air transportation is indicated by the continually mounting figures of the traffic reports of American Airways, Inc., transport subsidiary of the Aviation Corporation. The latest report shows that 7,708 passengers used the air lines during the month of June, an increase of 11 per cent. over the previous month. This is the largest number reported by any of the operators. Revenue increased 12 per cent. during the same period. During the first six months of 1930, 34,959 passengers flew over the various lines of American Airways; almost a 70 per cent. increase over 20,659 passengers carried the entire year of 1929.