



Just before the start from Cardington on Saturday. (FLIGHT Photo.)

THE LOSS OF H.M. AIRSHIP R 101

Death of Lord Thomson and 47 Others

WE very deeply regret to have to record the destruction of the airship R 101 at 2.10 a.m. (G.M.T.) on Sunday, October 5. There were on board 54 persons, of whom eight managed to get out of the airship with their lives, but two of them died in hospital afterwards. The complete list is given in another place. Among those who were lost were the Secretary of State for Air, Lord Thomson of Cardington, Wing-Commander R. B. B. Colmore, Director of Airship Development, Sir Sefton Brancker, Director of Civil Aviation, Major G. H. Scott and Col. V. C. Richmond, Assistant Directors of Airship Development, Squadron Leader Palstra, of the Royal Australian Air Force, and all the officers of the airship.

The story of the disaster is as follows. Early on the morning of October 1, R 101 was brought out of her shed after the insertion of a new bay, 45 ft. long, between the circular frames numbered 8 and 9, just aft of the passenger coach. As a consequence, the length of the airship was 777 ft., her gas capacity 5,500,000 cub. ft., and her gross lift upwards of 165 tons. The two forward Beardmore 585-h.p. Tornado engines had been made reversible, and all five engines were capable of driving ahead. Previously the starboard forward engine had been reserved for going astern. In four of the engine cars there were petrol starting engines, the petrol being stored in the power cars. The starboard forward engine had been provided with a Beardmore heavy-oil starting engine. The same evening the airship started on a trial flight up the east coast, and returned to the tower

at 7 a.m. on the next day, Thursday, October 2. As the test had been considered quite satisfactory, and the addition to the length of the airship had not made her any less easy to handle, it was decided to prepare at once to start on the flight to Ismailia and Karachi. It took 48 hours to get her ready for this flight, and, after considering weather conditions, the hour of 7 p.m. on Saturday the 4th was fixed for the start.

Scott

I went out to Cardington on the Saturday afternoon, accompanied by one of FLIGHT's photographers, and the photographs in this issue of the various officers and officials

who went on the flight were taken that afternoon. First I met Major Scott, an old and valued friend, outside the main offices of the Royal Airship Works, and had a talk with him. Scott was an exceptionally attractive personality. It is very rare to meet a man so absolutely enthusiastic about his subject and yet with such a calm judicial mind. He was a man who would hear every side of a question, discuss it fully, give every weight to arguments on the other side, and come to a decision on the sheer merits of a question. Attacks by people who differed from him never seemed to ruffle him in the slightest. He never sought publicity for himself, though he was always ready to talk frankly and fully with anyone who

genuinely wanted to get a grip of airship questions. He was both man of action and man of brain. He will be chiefly remembered for his successful command of first R 34, and recently R 100, on double crossings of the Atlantic. But perhaps he never showed his skill as an

TO ENGLAND

Mourn! not despairing, as should hope depart—
When great thy grief, be thou thyself more great;
For ease thou wast not made; lift up thy heart
By trial formed to triumph over fate.

See, through thy tears, heroic faces beam
Of those thy sons, who for the love of thee
Assailed the skies, to fall in faith supreme
That thou the conquest they have missed shalt see.

Be brave to bear, as they were bold to soar;
Abandon not the aery paths they trod;
And, for their sake, endeavour thou the more
To take the way that bore their souls to God.
DARLING.

This poem by Lord Darling in the "Times" is reproduced by kind permission.