

**Commercial Aviation****THE SOUTH ATLANTIC MAIL ROUTE***Air France's Plans for Next Year : Flying Boats and Landplanes to be Used*

**T**HE final preparations are now being made by Air France for a progressive speeding-up of their air line from Europe to South America.

At present despatch boats carry the mails over the 2,100 miles between Dakar on the African coast and Natal on the Brazilian coast. During the present winter the distance covered by these despatch boats is to be reduced by some 800 miles, so saving a day, and next summer the boats will be dispensed with altogether in favour of aircraft.

Already seventeen flights across the Atlantic have been made by the Company, nine in the three-engined Couzinet landplane *Arc en Ciel*, and eight in the four-engined Latécoère flying boat *Croix du Sud*. Yet another should be made towards the end of this month by the Bleriot *Santos Dumont* four-engined flying boat, which has just completed its tests. Later two other aeroplanes will be added to the fleet—a large four-engined Farman and a four-engined Lioré flying boat similar in layout to the type at present used on Air France's Mediterranean services, but with four 650 h.p. engines. While experiments are being carried out with these machines, three of the batch of five *Croix du Sud* type flying boats which have been ordered by the French Air Ministry will be set aside in case they may be needed to operate the service after the present series of flights has been completed.

Meanwhile, however, the ocean crossing is to be shortened. Instead of transferring the mails at Dakar to the despatch boats, the aeroplane will leave the African coast at a more northerly point and fly to the Cape Verde Islands, transferring the mails to the despatch boat there. This will shorten the water journey by approximately 450 miles. In addition, the

despatch boat, instead of proceeding to the Brazilian coast, will halt at the islands of Fernando de Noronha, 300 miles from the mainland. These islands have hitherto been thought impracticable for landplanes, but concrete runways have been constructed and fast Fokkers will fly out from the mainland to land here and pick up the mail. On the Africa-Cape Verde Islands stretch Wibault-Penhoets similar to those used on the London-Paris service, but without seats, will be operated when this system is put into operation.

In this manner a day will be saved in the transport of mail between Europe and South America. In addition, valuable operational experience of the South Atlantic route will be gained, and when it is decided to fly regularly over the whole route, only 1,400 miles of water will remain to be bridged by air.

These initial plans will be put into operation during November and the "all-air" route will, it is expected, be operating before the summer of next year. The saving of time that will finally be made was shown by one of recent experimental air crossings, when the mails were unloaded at Croydon and delivered to the G.P.O. 2 days and 5 hours after leaving South America—an overall average speed of 106 m.p.h.

So far the most experienced of the Transatlantic pilots is Mermoz, who has made nine crossings in the Couzinet *Arc en Ciel*, and had previously made two crossings in a Farman machine. His record is, however, being challenged by Com. Bonnot, who piloted the *Croix du Sud* on her eight crossings. The Bleriot, which makes its first crossing this month, will be piloted by Bossoutrot, formerly a pilot on the Air France London-Paris route.

**Aerodromes in India**

It has been decided that, subject to the exigencies of the services, civil machines will be permitted to make use of R.A.F. aerodromes in India.

**Northern Airways**

As the season is over, Mr. George Nicholson has withdrawn the Newcastle-Carlisle-Isle of Man service, and this will be started again by Northern Airways next May, when there are possibilities that a further service may be put into action.

At present the D.H. "Dragon" is available for private charter work.

**A New "Air Pilot of Great Britain"**

Few Government publications are so excellent in all ways as is "The Air Pilot of Great Britain and Ireland." The latest edition of this work is now available from H.M. Stationery Office, price 12s. 6d., postage extra. It contains a vast amount of information about flying, provides an authority on the rules and regulations, and is a mine of great value when it comes to the details of all licensed aerodromes. This new edition is much better arranged than the previous one, and it has been sectionalised so that reference is easier. Seaplane stations now come under a separate heading, as does the information about organised airways. It is, in short, a book which no pilot can afford to do without.

**G.A.P.A.N. Navigation Lectures and W/T Course**

The annual winter session of the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators of the British Empire Lectures in connection with the examination to be held in March next, will commence about October 23 and continue for five months. The Classes will be held twice weekly from 6-7.30 p.m., the fee being £5 5s., which includes the use of maps, charts and equipment. A set of books covering the required subjects can be had on loan for those taking the classes at a cost of £1 for the entire period, plus a deposit. The Classes will be held in London and those who wish to join should send their names together with £5 5s. to The Clerk, Guild of Air Pilots, 61, Cheapside, E.C.2. The Guild has also made tentative arrangements with the London Telegraph Training College for a Course from about the middle of October to the end of March next, covering all subjects in connection with the Air Ministry W/T Licence, at a reduced fee.

**Continental Air Mail Reductions**

New charges are now in force whereby parcels for European countries can be sent for sums varying between 1s. 4d. and 4s. for the first pound, with a lower rate, between 4d. and 1s., for each subsequent pound up to 22.

**New Chinese Air Line**

The South-West Aviation Company of Canton is contemplating a new air line connecting Canton, Hainan Island, and Nanning. The line between Canton and Lungchow has been very successful since its inauguration.

**Increase Extraordinary**

Some interesting figures have been received from the Portsmouth, Southsea, and Isle of Wight Aviation, Ltd., showing the growth of traffic during the last three years, each being taken up to September 30.

In 1932, 15,418 passengers were carried; in 1933 the number was 16,395; and this year the figure has been more than doubled, totalling 39,211. Between 1933 and 1934 the number carried on the "ferry" service was actually trebled, and rose to 25,782 this year.

The total mileage has increased from 70,250 in 1932 to 355,195 in 1934.

**The Advantages of Air Mail**

The accompanying table, prepared by Imperial Airways, Ltd., shows the cost of sending a letter by air to various destinations along the Empire routes, with the times by air and surface transport, and an indication of the time saved by air despatch:—

Destination.	½ oz. Letter. (Cost.)	Time. By Air. (Days.)	Surface Transport. (Days.)	Days Saved by Air.
Cairo... ..	3½d.	2½	5	2½
Baghdad ... ..	3½d.	3	6-7	3-4
Khartoum ... ..	5d.	3	9-12	6-9
Nairobi ... ..	7d.	5	16-24	11-19
Calcutta ... ..	8d.	6	16	10
Rangoon ... ..	8d.	7	19	12
Johannesburg ... ..	9d.	8	18	10
Singapore ... ..	11d.	8	22	14
Cape Town ... ..	10d.	9	17	8