

PRIVATE FLYING

LORD SEMPILL, A.F.C., F.R.Ae.S., CONTINUING THE STORY OF HIS WORLD FLIGHT, DESCRIBES AERONAUTICAL CONDITIONS IN THE INDIAN PROVINCES

KARACHI, the gateway of India as far as flying is concerned, has a large and well-organised aerodrome. For several years a terminus, rather than a gateway, for the British-India Imperial Airway, Karachi will become increasingly important with the completion of the Australian route. It is already fairly well equipped with good sheds and night landing lights, but as a good deal of money has been made available by the Indian Government for its further development, considerable improvement in its layout and facilities is to be expected in the near future.

For those who, like myself, have long been interested in the future of lighter-than-air craft, it is sad to see the mooring-mast, erected as one link of an Empire chain of bases for airships, not being utilised. The mast, together with the airship hangar which is used by Imperial Airways, is, however, kept in fine order, and both will, it is hoped, eventually serve the purpose for which they were built.

While at Karachi I stayed with Commander Watt, one of our few remaining airship officers, who is in charge of the airport, having been there for the last four years. He is an excellent organiser, and, indeed, I found all the officials most obliging and anxious to help. Mr. and Mrs. Mollison were there when I arrived, everyone deploring their bad luck after having put up such a wonderful performance on the first lap of the Melbourne Race. I found that tremendous interest had been aroused by the Race.

Maintenance Problem

THERE is so much of interest at the various stops, and so many people to see, that it is difficult to find time to give one's machine the attention that it needs. Under such conditions one wishes for a really well-trained man who could, for example, look after the cleaning and refuelling. One cannot always rely on getting the machine properly washed; at one stop the fine finish was entirely spoilt by a mechanic using a vile fish soap. Incidentally, the necessity, on such a flight as this, for frequent changing of the elements on the oil filter has decided me to fit one of the Auto-Klean type when I do the next routine overhaul.

After leaving Karachi, my next stage took me to Jodhpur, which was reached after six hours' flying. A good deal of the country appeared very barren, but I passed a number of landing grounds laid out by H.H. the Maharajah of Jodhpur. There is a great future for aviation in India, and if more of the native princes followed the Maharajah's example progress would be very rapid. Apart from the main aerodrome at Jodhpur, His Highness has laid out some fifteen landing grounds throughout the State, all of which are level and not less than 500 yards square, each having a wind sock and a man in attendance. I suggested that they should be marked with an air sign indicating the name, and gathered that this suggestion will be carried out in due course.

The Maharajah did me the honour of inviting me to be his guest during my stay, and I was greatly impressed by his technical knowledge of all aviation matters as well as his great keenness. He is an excellent pilot. I saw him take off and land in his Monospar with full load, and the machine could not have been better handled. His High-

Enthusiasm In India

ness has two Monospars and a Comper "Swift," as well as two "Gipsy Moths," which are generally on loan to the Flying Club. I understood he intended to add to his "stable" by fresh purchases of British aircraft, and that he was much impressed by the performance of the latest De Havilland machines.

It was a real pleasure to visit this model state, which is administered by British ministers in the employ of the Maharajah. The city, viewed from the air, is very imposing, with good buildings well laid out. The aerodrome at Jodhpur is very fine, with a well-built station building, and a hangar large enough to accommodate any commercial machine which might want to put up for the night.

Civil Development

THE layout of the aerodrome and sheds, which are well designed and maintained, has been arranged by the minister responsible for engineering services, who has had the advantage of technical advice by Mr. Muntz and Mr. Nigel Norman. I had a most interesting talk with Mr. S. G. Edgar, the Minister for Public Works, who was very anxious to learn the latest British practice. Excellent night-landing equipment has been installed, and the beacon can be seen from a distance of fifty miles.

Aviation in India, under the direction of the D.C.A., Captain Tymms, is making good progress generally, and there is considerable development in private flying. The Aero Club of India and Burma, which is affiliated to the F.A.I., is the co-ordinating body, and acts as an intermediary between the Government and the flying clubs.

Prior to 1934 the clubs received a fixed bonus as well as a payment of Rs.100 for each *ab initio* pilot trained and licensed. In the grant for 1934-35 a fixed payment of Rs.17,000 only to each club was arranged for. In 1933 the total membership amounted to 1,750, the hours flown being 11,000—a considerable increase over the previous year. Of the 68 *ab initio* pilots trained during the year, 39 were Indian and 29 European. At the end of 1933 there were 82 civil aircraft, 37 being in the private category. On the same date there were in India 216 private pilots, 43 commercial and eight "limited commercial" pilots. Registered ground engineers numbered 23.

The cost of club flying tends to decrease, although the balance for 1933 was on the wrong side. From an analysis of the accounts of the subsidised clubs for that year, it would appear that while the receipts per flying hour, including the subsidy, amounted to Rs.52, the cost approximated to Rs.55. As a result of a series of conferences arranged by the Aero Club of India to discuss this problem, a marked improvement is expected.

Club's Mail Service

THE good work of the Delhi Flying Club in running the air mail service between Karachi and Delhi for a period of eighteen months prior to the inauguration of the Karachi-Calcutta Section of the Australian route deserves special mention. The average load of mail carried in the "Gipsy Moth" used on this service amounted to 101lb. per trip, and on only two occasions did the machine fail to connect with the westward-bound Imperial Airways air liner at Karachi.

Their Excellencies the Viceroy and the Countess of Willingdon, by their frequent use of air transport for official tours, show a great example in thus encouraging aviation, which is proving a valuable aid to their work in India.