

### Commercial Aviation

up. An important person wanted to hire a special aeroplane from a well-known charter firm to visit the British Embassy in a certain Continental capital. The weather was really too bad and the firm said so. Shortly after this the indignant client rang through to say that the weather over there was not at all bad. The company

replied that the Meteorological Office, with hourly reports at its disposal, said it was very bad indeed. To this the client triumphantly retorted that the Meteorological Office must be wrong, for he had spoken personally to no less highly placed an official than the Ambassador himself.

A. VIATOR.

### Nearly All Air

ONE more step in the elimination of the present train journey involved in a journey by Imperial Airways to Africa or the East was made in practice last week-end. In future passengers will travel by train from Paris to Marseilles (instead of Brindisi), where they will board the flying boat for Brindisi and Cairo. *Castor* was the first passenger boat to pick up its load at Marseilles.

### Successful "Cramming"

IN November the Imperial School of Air Navigation completed its first year's "operations," during which 101 day, 25 night and 73 correspondence course students have passed through Mr. Martin's hands. As a result of a last-minute alteration, the first figure was incorrectly given in last week's issue as 105, but the difference is hardly important.

The detailed results of the last examination for second class navigators are not yet through, but for the April and June events the proportions were as follows. April: 33 students entered, 19 passed, and 11 failed in one subject only. June: 14 students entered, 9 passed, and 3 failed in one subject only.

The next series of classes will start on January 12.

### A Calculating Protractor

THE pilot of to-day is beset with so many problems demanding rapid solutions that any instrument designed to simplify the work should find a ready sale. Airco, Ltd., of 3, St. James' Square, London, S.W.1, have recently produced a combined protractor and calculator which has been, in fact, designed by Mr. S. J. Gilbert, of the same company.

Briefly, this instrument consists of a square transparent protractor with a length of gut for course measurement, and incorporating an Appleyard scale calculator which may be used not only to solve time, distance and speed problems but which can also be used to calculate fuel consumptions and, with the help of a few memorised conversion factors, to transmute various units of distance. Arrows are etched against the scales in order to simplify the latter procedure. Provided that the simple method involved is practised, calculations can be made almost instantaneously in all cases, and it is possible, of course, to work out one's ground speed in the first place, and from this to estimate a time of arrival—a knowledge useful to any pilot flying in thick weather. The usefulness of the logarithmic principle is hardly considered by the average private owner—even by those owning C.D.C.s.

The Gilbert protractor, which is small enough to be conveniently disposed in one's pocket, is sold for 17s. 6d.

### Last Tributes to Mermoz

A MEMORIAL service, held at the Chappelle St. Louis des Invalides in Paris, on Wednesday of last week (December 30), marked the final stage in the tragedy of Jean Mermoz, who, with Pichodou (second pilot), Ezan (navigator), Lavidalie (mechanic), and Cruvelhier (radio operator), vanished in the South Atlantic with the Latécoère flying boat *Croix du Sud*, on December 7. The Air Minister, M. Pierre Cot, representing the French Government and Nation, officials of Air France and a funeral guard from the Army with muted drums and bugles, stood around a flower-decked cenotaph and paid their last tribute with military honours reserved for soldiers and heroes, while three Air France liners, escorted by a squadron of fighting machines, circled overhead.

No accident in recent times has so profoundly shocked the French people, to whom Mermoz had communicated his personality as the relentless pioneer of the first air mail service to span the ocean at a single hop on a regular schedule. During the preceding week M. Louis Allegre, Director General of Air France, had made a double journey across the South Atlantic, all within the space of forty hours, to perform a funeral act on behalf of the administration and personnel of the company. On passing over the spot where the *Croix du Sud's* last message was picked up he dropped a wreath on the waters. This gesture expressed the confidence of Air France in their 9,600 miles air route to Santiago, Chile, built up from the Toulouse-Barcelona air service, which started at far back as 1918.

### Mersey Ferry

WITH the idea of running a thrice-daily service between Hooton Park and Speke and, probably, a passenger service to North Wales, Utility Airways, of Hooton, has recently purchased a De Luxe Monospar. The machine was flown north from Hanworth by Mrs. Davidson (Miss Joy Muntz as was), who, with her husband, is a director of the firm.

### British Airways' Year

DURING 1936 British Airways' services ran with a percentage regularity of 95.7 over all routes and carried 21,000 passengers. The passenger-mile figure was just over 2½ million, and 3,500,000 lb. of mail has been carried. The last figure—for the nine months or so during which the company held the mail contract—is equivalent to some 23 million letters.

### "Cavalier" in Bermuda

LAST week the Short Boat *Cavalier*, which is to operate the experimental Bermuda-New York service with a Pan-American S.42 B, arrived at Bermuda. When the machine has been assembled it will be flown about the district in order that the various radio, navigational and meteorological problems can be studied.

Meanwhile, the first long-distance boat's sister ship, *Cambria*, is almost complete.

### Linking the Western Isles

EVERY island on the west coast of Scotland from Arran to Lewis is to be surveyed within the next few weeks. Mr. Glyn Roberts, director of West of Scotland Air Services, Glasgow, will carry out the survey for an at present unnamed company. A plan is in hand not only to establish bases at Gourock, Mull, Skye, and Stornoway, but to include almost every Scottish island where it is possible to provide safe flying-boat anchorage.

### Growing Up

DURING the three years in which their services have been in operation, Jersey Airways' traffic figures have progressively increased. In 1934 the company carried 19,000 passengers; in 1935 the figure was 25,000; and in 1936 it topped 30,000. Starting with one D.H. Dragon, the fleet now consists of six D.H. 86s and three D.H. 89s.

Jersey's airport should be available for use early in March, and after that month the London-Jersey service will cease to call at Alderney. A special service will thereafter run between Jersey and this island.

### The Crawley Accident

VERY little additional information came to light at the inquest, held last week, on the two victims of the British Airways' crash near Crawley on November 19.

The radio operator, Mr. C. G. Wheeler, said that Gatwick had been circled preparatory to making the final approach and that he was in communication with the airport until within half a minute of the impact. He saw trees beneath the machine and called to the pilot, but was not sure whether his voice was heard.

The engineer, Mr. G. R. Blowers, said that he was asked by the pilot for the position of the landing light switch, and the coroner very aptly remarked that such a question from the pilot was extraordinary.

Mr. E. Simmonds, senior control officer at Gatwick, said that continuous bearings were given and that the airport was fully lighted at the time. No change in the airport radio equipment had been considered necessary since the accident. Mr. W. van Oppen, assistant aircraft superintendent at Gatwick, said that this was the pilot's first complete night trip, but that he had flown it by day on two previous occasions. He denied that pilots generally were dissatisfied with conditions at Gatwick as a night-flying base.

A point which was not brought up at the inquest was that, to the best of our knowledge, no K.L.M. pilot had been permitted to take full charge of a Fokker F.XII until he had completed at least fifty hours as co-pilot in the type.