

The Caproni Ca.134 is the latest word in Italian military biplanes. Intended for army co-operation, it has twin rudders, an outlandish undercarriage and a 900 h.p. Isotta.

The Piaggio concern, of course, has ever tended toward the radical in aircraft design. How many people remember its huge four-engined trans-Atlantic monoplane which looked for all the world like an overgrown B.A. Double Eagle? I learned that this model is "still experimental" and so is the three-engined bomber which also had (perhaps, in view of the information, one should say has) Double-Eagle-like wings. In all fairness let it

be said that the Piaggios were in the air before the B.A.s.

But to revert to the new twin-engined bomber. Labelled the P.32, it is characterised by a strikingly short span (59 ft.) which has been made possible by an ingenious high-lift device which is said to work very well. This is a double flap, but not of the variety which seems to interest some people in this country, i.e., the double-split variety. To put it simply, there are two flaps in tandem and both are lowered at appropriate angles to give a high-lift effect.

The stated disposable load of the P.32 is no less than 7,716 lb., and the top speed 260 m.p.h. with a brace of Piaggio P.XI RC 40s.

When the undercarriage is up there are very pronounced blister-like fairings beneath the nacelles which detract somewhat from a very clean and businesslike appearance.

The gun turrets (mounting a total of four weapons), like the flap system, are operated by compressed air.

It was whispered that eighty-five of these very formidable aeroplanes are already in service. Their flying characteristics should make a most absorbing study. Someone told me that they can manoeuvre like small fighters because of their short span and high load factors.

The BR20 bomber was the prototype of the Fiat machines in the Damascus race, which, although they hit some rough luck, proved themselves very fast over long distances. Leading data are: Disposable load 7,936 lb. (the same, incidentally, as the Fiat G.18V transport, also exhibited), top speed 267 m.p.h., landing speed 75 m.p.h., and range 5,590 miles. This last is the manufacturer's figure, relating,



undoubtedly, to the machine with supplementary tanks and in gross (decidedly) overload condition.

Two thousand horse-power is taken from the twin Fiat A.80 RC 41 two-row radials and delivered to constant-speed Hamilton-type airscrews.

The top-speed figure seems decidedly optimistic in view of the large, square-cut and somewhat humpy fuselage. Nose, ventral, and top-fuselage gun positions are included, and if the guns can be used effectively from their unobtrusive nests (and one must, of course, query the practical value of all free armament on machines doing over 250 m.p.h.) the BR 20 should be a very handy weapon to have around an air force.

Archaic Armament

The Junkers Ju.86K (as supplied to Sweden) struck me as being a very sound bomber, but marred to a certain extent by archaic armament arrangements. The useful load is given at 6,460 lb., which seems low in comparison with the figures for comparable Italian types. Hornet-type engines, built by B.M.W.s, give a speed of well over 200 m.p.h., although it is not likely to be the 248 m.p.h. now claimed for the civil version of the Ju. 86.

Having heard some glowing reports about the Savoia S.79B bomber I was disappointed to find that its place had been taken at the exhibition by a transport machine. It seems that S.79Bs (these are twin-engined types, usually of about 2,000 h.p.) have been ordered as standard equipment by the Argentine, Rumanian and Iraqi Govern-

ments. A story was going the rounds that the Italian Government has earmarked some S.79Bs fitted with 1,400 h.p. Alfa Romeo engines from which 300-and-a-bit m.p.h. is expected, which is nice going if you can get the range.

It seems that during demonstrations before the Argentine Government someone questioned the manoeuvrability of the S.79B, so it was looped four or five times just to show that there was no ill-feeling. It weighs over 21,000 lb.

A bomber-reconnaissance

A particularly welcome exhibit is the Heinkel He. 112 fighter, a diminutive projectile which does about 300 m.p.h. carrying two Oerlikon "cannons" and a pair of machine guns. The engine is an inverted -vee Junkers Jumo 210 Ea of 685 (max.) h.p.

