

## THE OUTLOOK (CONTINUED)

daylight at week-ends; and at week-ends in his district he says that there is no R.A.F. activity, although R.A.F. machines roar all over the sky during the week.

Assuming the facts to be as stated, it seems a very serious matter that the enthusiasm of the volunteer members of any Observer post should be allowed to slacken for want of co-operation by aircraft. It is not only enthusiasm which must suffer in such conditions, but aptitude. Everybody realises, or ought to realise, the extent to which our prospects of successful defence against air raiders depend on prompt reports coming in from the Observer Corps; and the fighter squadrons in particular must know that their chances of an interception, which is the end and object of their existence, must be gravely diminished if the Observers are not fully up to the mark in spotting the enemy quickly and sending in very prompt reports. Any sluggishness in their action may mean that a raid will get through, with damage to some important place in Britain, while the Hurricanes scour the skies in vain.

We feel sure that once this point is brought to the notice of the authorities steps will be taken at once to put matters right.

### More Voluntary Reservists

ON the Service pages of this issue there are two important Air Ministry announcements, one authorising the establishment of a reserve of airmen of the Auxiliary Air Force, and the other establishing new branches of the R.A.F. Volunteer Reserve, which will train men for crew duties and for the secondary trades of aircraftmen.

Of the former, it can only be said that this step is overdue. Some years ago the Air Ministry instituted a Reserve of Auxiliary Air Force Officers, but took no steps to provide a reserve of Auxiliary airmen. That mistake is now being rectified.

Apart from the A.A.F., the Volunteer Reserve is the only way in which our air arm can draw direct on men in civil life for reinforcement in time of war. There, perhaps, it was natural and right to make a start by concentrating on pilots until the scheme had got on its feet and was assured of success. In the event of war, casualties are likely to be higher among pilots than in

any other branch of the Air Force, and the first thing was to provide "spare parts." Quite lately crew duties have been recognised as of the first importance, and so it is reasonable to start a reserve of civilians who are qualified as wireless operator/air gunners or as observers. Ground duties are also sure to increase in time of war, and so a reserve of aircraftmen for some of those duties will be very useful.

It will be noticed that V.R. men are not to undertake the most highly skilled jobs such as fitter, rigger, or armourer, but may supply carpenters, fabric workers, photographers, motor drivers, etc. It remains to be seen whether entry into these branches of the Volunteer Reserve will prove popular. We should imagine that the V.R. would not have much chance where there is an A.A.F. squadron within reach, unless the latter is unable to accept any more recruits.

### An Ocean Tragedy

ALL fatal air disasters are sad, but somehow the public is more acutely affected by them when the victims are passengers than when they are professional airmen who have made it their business in life to face the chances of the air. For two years the Short boat *Cavalier* has won golden opinions from all who have travelled in her between New York and Bermuda, and the high compliment paid to her standard of comfort by the editor of an American aeronautical paper was quoted by Sir John Reith in his speech at the last general meeting of Imperial Airways. The holiday-makers who set out from New York for a luxurious flight and a pleasant time in "the isles of the blest," never dreamed that the Atlantic would take its toll of three lives while the rest would have to face the appalling ordeal of clinging to life belts for ten hours in a wintry ocean. We can only be thankful that ten of the company were saved.

Until the enquiry into the accident is held one can only speculate as to the initial cause. "Icing of the engines" was reported in the radio message. This probably referred to ice formation in the carburettors, although the air intakes are heated. The weather conditions do not appear to have been very exceptional, and the icing is rather difficult to explain.

### Forthcoming Events

- JANUARY.
- Thurs., 26th. R.Ae.S. Portsmouth Branch Lecture: "The Wind Tunnel," by D. L. Ellis, B.Sc., A.R.T.C., A.F.R.Ae.S.
- Tues., 31st. R.Ae.S. Graduates' Section Lecture: "Influence of Airscrews on Engine Design," by F. M. Thomas A.F.R.Ae.S.  
R.Ae.S. Isle of Wight Branch Lecture: "Light Alloy Manufacture," by R. Worsdale.
- FEBRUARY.
- Wed.—Fri., 1st—3rd. Aerodrome Owners' Association: Airports Conference and Exhibition.
- Wed. 1st. R.U.S.I. Lecture: "Air Co-operation," by Group Capt. A. J. Capel, D.S.O., D.F.C.
- Thurs., 2nd. R.Ae.S. Yeovil Branch Lecture: "Steel Manufacture," by John Hopcroft.
- Tues., 7th. R.Ae.S. Joint Lecture with I.A.E. and others: "Sleeve-Valve Engines," by A. H. R. Fedden, D.Sc., M.B.E., M.I.A.E., M.S.A.E., F.R.Ae.S.; Institution of Mechanical Engineers, 7.45 p.m.
- Fri., 10th. Lancashire Aero Club: Annual Dance, Grand Hotel, Manchester.
- Thurs., 16th. R.Ae.S. Lecture: "Ignition Problems," by Dr. G. E. Baird, M.I.E.E., F.Inst.P.
- Fri., 17th. Cinque Ports Flying Club: Annual Dinner and Dance, Majestic Garden Hotel, Folkestone.

- Fri., 24th. York and Leeming Flying Club: Annual Ball, Harrogate.  
D.H. Technical School: Annual Ball, Hyde Park Hotel, Knightsbridge, 9 p.m.
- Tues., 28th. Hampshire Aeroplane Club: Annual Dinner and Dance, South Western Hotel, Southampton.
- MARCH.
- Thurs., 2nd. R.Ae.S. Lecture: "Testing Stability and Control," by Ing. A. G. von Baumhauer.
- Thurs., 16th. R.Ae.S. Lecture: "Relative Merits of Carburettors and Direct Petrol Injection," by J. E. Ellor, F.R.Ae.S., and F. M. Owner, F.R.Ae.S.
- APRIL.
- Thurs., 20th. R.Ae.S. Lecture: "Possible Steel Developments," by Dr. T. Swinden, F.R.Ae.S.
- MAY.
- Thurs., 4th. R.Ae.S. Lecture: "Strength of Thin Metal Construction," by H. L. Cox.
- Sat., 20th. Empire Air Day.
- Thurs., 25th. R.Ae.S.: Wilbur Wright Memorial Lecture by Dr. G. W. Lewis.
- JUNE.
- Sat., 24th. Royal Air Force Garden Party.
- JULY.
- Sat. 8th.—Sun., 23rd. Brussels Aero Show.

\*All these lectures take place at 6.30 p.m. at the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, Storey's Gate, London, S.W.1.