

COMMERCIAL AVIATION

PREPARING FOR THE FIRST: A photograph taken last week at Southampton showing *Cabot* receiving fuel from a Harrow tanker. Last week-end saw *Caribou*, commanded by Capt. J. C. Kelly Rogers, with Capt. S. G. Long as chief officer and Mr. B. C. Frost as first officer, make her first regular Atlantic crossing after being refuelled at Foynes. The machine, carrying 1,055 lb. of mail, reached Newfoundland at 10.10 p.m. (G.M.T.) on Saturday and was due to leave New York, on the return flight, yesterday. *Cabot* will make the next eastward crossing on Saturday.

THE WEEK AT CROYDON

"A. Viator," in his Transport Comments, Discusses Militarised Civilians, Slow Diplomatic Travel, Aerial Obstructions and "Lost Airport Plans"

THE new Junkers Ju.90 has been seen at Croydon lately and is a handsome aeroplane, cruising, I should say, at about 190-195 m.p.h. It is not quite as big or as heavy as the "E" class machines, but is faster and, moreover, it is one of the few types I have heard talked of as a 40-seater which really has 40 seats and carries 40 passengers. D.L.H. have put this machine on the Berlin-London service.

One of the newspapers called the machine a bomber, which raised some indignation, I am told, on the part of its owners—who, if they are wise, will retort good-humouredly that the Ensign is a troop carrier. It's all nonsense, anyway, for any fast commercial machine is a potential war craft, just as there are certain types of merchant vessels which may be armed in war time.

General Huntzinger, one-time member of a French military mission to Turkey, came in to Croydon last Wednesday by Air France. He is, I am told, to act as liaison officer between the French and British members of the military mission to Moscow. Let us hope the mission will move quicker than the political one, otherwise it won't be liaison officers who will be wanted, but male nurses skilled in matters concerned with second childhood and senile decay.

Incidentally, it augurs ill for the progressive-mindedness of the military mission that they hired a boat—I trust neither a sailing packet nor a paddle steamer—to go to Moscow (via the Azores, was it?) in order to miss the Kiel Canal, whereas there is every inducement to go to Moscow by air. Speed should be the slogan in these matters, and there can be no advantage in the ruminative attitude of mind induced by sea voyaging.

Commercial pilots are having a grim time these days, what with large-scale exercises and small-scale but no less dangerous exercises by those young officers who decide to fly in droves through clouds in search of some jolly spot (ultimately) at which to lunch. Then there are the barrage balloons, which are not in cloud except when clouds gather round them, but which are apt to break loose and drift trailing lengths of steel cable behind them.

By the way, I wish our Croydon balloon boys, the ones in charge of the carnival-type balloons they use for testing cloud height, would be a bit more careful. On Sunday morning I thought I was being haunted by the missing portion of the headless horseman when a large expressionless purple face hovered outside my window. It was one of their nasty little balloons, but the point is that the



base of lowest cloud was nowhere near my windowsill.

Works and bricks are having a lovely time building wooden enclosures wherein to meditate between spells of feverish activity with concrete mixers, pneumatic drills and other nerve-shattering devices. I noted with alarm, incidentally, that no sooner had the Ministry handed secret plans of aerodromes to a contractor than these were left in an unattended car, according to immemorial tradition, and stolen. These were probably the ten-year-old schemes for improving Croydon, which could not be put in hand earlier, as they were incubating at the bottom of some tremendously deep letter tray. It would have been too bad if they had been lost.

The tragic occurrence of last week, when an unfortunate stranger walked into an airscrew, shows how unwise it is to let so many casual strangers wander about the airport. This is no time to have unauthorised persons all over the place.

Mr. Hore-Belisha flew to Paris one day last week accompanied by his smile, hat, and eyebrows. He went by Air France, but (*pace* Perks) he did so because Imperial Airways were full up. I fear Perks will have an awfully feverish time, blood continuously on the boil and all that, when the mooted pooling scheme between B.O. Airways and Air France comes into being (if and when it does), for passengers will then, as is but logical, simply take the next machine to Paris irrespective of what its national registration happens to be.

I am told that the new hangar, where *Scylla* was stowed and fell into the drainage system, is not really ready. It has gone up in record time, and is said to be capable of housing three "E" class machines, and it is badly needed in these torrential times. Everything is perfect except for the fact that there is, as yet, no lighting, so that it is useless to put "E" or "F" types in it because they cannot be worked on at night. Would you believe it?

A. VIATOR.