



An aerial view of Napier's installation and flight-testing department at Luton airport. Engine-test aircraft can be seen on the tarmac. On the extreme left is a Manchester centre section used for engine testing.

Napier Flight

Engine Installation Luton: So

Illustrated

ALL the leading engine manufacturers have for some years maintained their own flight development sections, but it is not general knowledge that the importance of these establishments is such that in some cases they now rank almost equal with the airframe and engine manufacturers themselves.

A separate design department for Napier engine installations was first formed at Acton in 1935; prior to this the work was done by the main D.O. at Acton. In 1938 a flight test section was organized at Northolt, but limited facilities soon led to a search for a new site, and in March, 1940, a transfer was made to the Luton Municipal Airport.

For a start the accommodation at Luton was modest, consisting of a Bellman hangar and a small hut, but during the six past years a complete, self-contained experimental branch has been built up, with an imposing modern office and drawing office building.

When the installation design department was transferred more recently to Luton a nucleus was left at Acton for liaison with the engine branch. Now design study and project design sections are in a position to advise manufacturers and to prepare all data with regard to the installation of the companies' power units and the performance, range and payload for any projected aircraft designs. In addition, these sections can tackle, at the Luton establishment, kindred problems which may arise, whether they concern aircraft structures, buildings or the stressing of drain covers.

In passing, a small but important shop devoted to model-making must be mentioned. Although on being presented with a project model one designer remarked drily, "I can read drawings," scale models which, incidentally, are of exceptional quality and accuracy, have proved most valuable.

It would be impossible in a few pages to describe more than a small part of the work undertaken by the Napier establishment.

