Before proposing his toast—"The memory of the Wright brothers"—at the dinner in celebration of the 50th anniversary of powered, controlled flight, at the Dorchester Hotel, London, on December 17th, Sir William Farrer, President of the Royal Aeronautical Society, read this message from Her Majesty the Queen: "I send my— and I have little doubt that it is—we should not be surprised measuring instruments. In the end they became masters of their love of it, and find in flying something for which there is no subject of flying, to report the work which its individual members had been doing, to publish these papers which we read, and to spread them throughout the world for the benefit of others." Individual names mentioned by the Minister during the course of his speech were those of Sir Alliott Verdon Roe, Claude Graham-White, Sir Geoffrey de Havilland, Sir Frederick Handley Page, Harold Perrin, Mrs. Hewlett, Sir Thomas Sopwith, Fred Wright, the Short brothers, G. Holt Thomas, Lord Trenchard and Sir Sefton Brancacker. Of the Americans he particularly named Cody and Curtiss.

Lord Brabazon of Tara (described by the Minister as "head of all aeronautics in Britain," being President of the Royal Aero Club) then replied. The Club, he said, stood for the human side of flying. Through its portals all the great ones had passed, including the Wrights. He recalled that he knew Wilbur better, for it was Wilbur who came to England in 1908 and explained to Orville who stayed in America. Wilbur described as "curious, gaunt, polite, aloof," ready to talk to genuinely interested people but chilly and off-hand with those who viewed him as a curiosity. His great friend Sir Fred Sherriff (described by Lord Brabazon as the Wright brothers' Boswell) greatly enjoyed each other's company. Their idea of happiness was to be in each other's presence—with neither speaking a word. Lord Brabazon added that he had to find the equivalent of the Wright brothers in any provincial town.

In the course of his brilliant speech Lord Brabazon recalled how he introduced Wilbur to the great French constructor Voisin. Not knowing the other's language and throughout lunch they just sat and grinned at each other. Suddenly it was learned that the great Lebaudy airship was coming over, and the three ascended to the roof. Lord Brabazon was agog to hear le mot juste from Wilbur, and it came—"How very lucky to have seen that!" He once asked Wilbur if he would design him a machine: to do 100 m.p.h. and was tood that it was quite possible if he would provide the engine. The Wrights had a corner in their hearts for England, and they were treated with great consideration, and were regarded as friends and not exhibits.

Lord Brabazon spoke very movingly about the pioneers. The runway of aviation, he said, was paved with the tombstones of those who had fallen by the wayside. Although there had been a feeling in each others' presence that the first all-jet operation of their kind in Britain. In America (where the probe-and-drogue system had been tested by the U.S.A.F.) a Boeing B-47B six-jet bomber has already been tested as a tanker for refuelling in flight. A converted English Electric Canberra B.2 (Rol's-Royce Avons), it has been loaned to Flight Refuelling, Ltd., by the Ministry of Supply to enable flight trials to be made with the latest developments in the probe-and-drogue system at high altitudes and high speeds. A Gloster Meteor 8 will initially act as the receiver and the experiments will be the first all-jet operation of their kind in Britain. In America (where the probe-and-drogue system had been tested by the U.S.A.F. and adopted by the U.S. Navy) a Boeing B-47B six-jet bomber has already been tested as a tanker. Conversion of the Canberra has been carried out at Tarrant Rushton and has merely involved the installation in the bomb bay of the hose-drum unit, which controls the flow of fuel and the "spring-blind" action of the hose. Sir Alan Cobham, chairman and managing director of Flight Refuelling, Ltd., states that the work has proved beyond doubt how simply a bomber can be turned into a tanker "without fuss or bother." Also, he says, it has disposed of the lingering idea that special aircraft must be built to act as tankers. He adds: "With this new equipment a bomber or transport aircraft, if equipped with the necessary fixed fittings, can be converted into a refuelling tanker in the minimum of time, as 70 per cent of the equipment required is already built into the Canberra. For the purpose of the present experiments the receiver's probe-and-drogue system will be fitted to an operator's panel from which the operation is controlled. Measuring only 7in x 8jin, this is positioned in the cockpit.