



Photo by Wykeham

E MENSFORTH, C B E , M A , M I Mech E , F R A c S

Address by the New President

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AT THE
SEVENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
ASSOCIATION

(A report of the Meeting is on page 21)

I want to thank you very much for the honour you have done me in asking that I should try to follow in Mr WEIR's footsteps, particularly as I am comparatively a newcomer to the Helicopter, having suffered my first bite, but that a virulent one, only some eleven or twelve years ago

First we have to thank Mr Weir for acting as our President for three years through a most critical period in our Association's development Personally I can only speak as an ordinary Member, but Mr NORMAN HILL, with his experience of the strength our President has been at Council Meetings, intended in his Speech this evening to say

“ I conclude by speaking of a most important event, that of the retirement from the Office of President of our good friend JAMES WEIR, who with his self-effacing manner and robust encouragement, has on so many occasions stimulated our thoughts and actions and directed them along the lines which they should go in the best interests of the Association and the helicopter industry Our regret is, however, tempered by the knowledge that we shall continue to have the benefit of his advice and attendance at all Council Meetings in his capacity as our first Vice-President ”

I know that Mr WEIR has expressed his determination to stay with us, and it will be a source of satisfaction to all to know that his experience and advice will thus continue to be available to our Association

After many years of difficulty, where development has been carried on only through the faith and enthusiasm of a handful of pioneers, the helicopter, particularly through the catalytic stimulus of one war and the threat of further war, is now firmly accepted in the public mind as an immediate potentially major new factor in transportation Mr IGOR SITKORSKY has recently described the helicopter “ as the most universal vehicle ever created by man, with less than a thousandth of 1% of the earth's surface, a few summits of the highest mountains, only denied to it as to landing places It can land safely and under control on ground, sea, snow, ice or swamp ” Perhaps there is some poetic licence in this, but certainly the helicopter has proved that it can reach most places

In its final development for effective use there is great opportunity for Britain, as our geography, distribution of population centres and climate all make this country a natural forcing ground for the helicopter We must expect great competition from other countries as the prize of successful development is a high one This is particularly so, as the helicopter is not

a special military vehicle, and therefore those manufacturing it can expect greater continuity of load on their factories than perhaps from purely military machines

The helicopter is already favourably associated in the minds of the public with other than destruction, and it should be a source of the greatest satisfaction to all who have participated in its development that it has already been concerned so very much with the saving and not the loss of life, as most spectacularly demonstrated in Korea

A matter to which all of us, however, in this connection must give the closest attention is the reduction of noise since, if, as is necessary, multi-engined helicopters are to operate from densely populated areas, they must be quiet, otherwise, however essential the service they render may be, they will do great harm to the community by disturbing work and rest

Helicopter development will prove to be no easier than that of any other type of aircraft, and many difficulties and frustrations are to be expected. It is here that the Association will be so important in bringing together the still relatively few people concerned with these problems so that, in association, they may share the burden, and particularly maintain that common enthusiasm without which progress will indeed be slow

The other great task of the Association is that of educating the general public, and particularly those concerned with the planning of cities, etc., with the correct use of the helicopter, and with the timely provision of the facilities that it needs

The Association is a specialist one, and it cannot expect its membership to be enormous, although it can confidently look to a considerable recruitment in the next few years, but its influence has been and will continue to be out of all proportion to its actual numerical membership. The Association's financial position is, however, most intimately linked with its membership number, and everyone's help is needed in adding to this by energetic recruitment. The Chart which the Honorary Treasurer has explained to us shows the position very clearly. I already know the Council has most vigorously in hand the increasing of membership and the obtaining of a greater net income from the Journal

We have during the last year heard of British European Airways' declaration of policy as to their intention to employ helicopters for a large proportion of their Services, and we have received with the keenest interest their specification of the aircraft they would like. This presents an exciting problem for the designers. Looking again into the future, we have the prospect of the development of extraordinarily large sized helicopters, able particularly to influence military operations by, for example, lifting a Centurion tank, and with the obtaining of higher flight speeds with the compound or gyrodyne helicopter and with the converti-plane

It is to be hoped that designers will not ignore the possibilities of the mass-produced private owner driven helicopter, although the safe employment of this may well require education, rules and tests for pilot fitness very different from those which have been applied to road vehicles

I would like to end by expressing on behalf of all of us our very sincere thanks to the Council for their hard work during the year for the Association, and particularly our thanks to Miss McKim on whom falls the main weight of all the Office responsibilities