

Our Bookshelf.

By NORMAN J HULBERT A M I Ae E

“AIR FACTS AND PROBLEMS”

BY

Brig -Gen LORD THOMSON, C B E , D S O

(John Murray, 6s)

OUR appreciation of Lord Thomson's "Air Facts and Problems" will not be diminished by its publication hard upon the heels of "The Great Delusion," to which it constitutes an effective reply

It is reasonable written by a former and dealing with the of the Department sided, will contain may be regarded as on the subject The and Problems," will disappointed in this

Lord Thomson ly varied range of ple, a whole chapter is International Aerial the Washington In another chapter he and growth of the research, air defence, of the Air Force in expected, the problem air machine is very author



BRIG GENERAL LORD THOMSON, C B E , D S O

(Secretary of State for Air, 1924)

to assume that a book Secretary of State activities and future over which he pre-much of interest and an authoritative work reader of "Air Facts have no reason to be expectation has dealt with a wide-subjects For exam devoted to " Rules of Warfare as agreed by Conference in 1922 " deals with the history Royal Air Force, with air travel, the value Iraq, and, as may be of the lighter-than-ably handled by the

Unlike many enthusiasts who are inclined to touch lightly upon the accidents that have befallen airships in the past, Lord Thomson gives due prominence to such mishaps, and furnishes a table giving details of every airship disaster since 1919

In this connection we may quote the lines with which this chapter (on Airships) opens " In the year 1823 a well-known Divine remarked sententiously and poetically

' I think an Air Balloon quite fairly can,
Be made the emblem of a wicked man '

" These were the early days of gas-bags No doubt the reverend gentleman expressed a widely held opinion , from the earliest experiences up to the present time airships have aroused misgivings in the minds of scientific as well as pious people "

The author goes on to deal with mooring masts, weather conditions affecting airships, the breakaway of R 33, and future airship routes

We are very glad to see that Lord Thomson, in a chapter headed "The British Empire and Aviation," stresses the importance of utilising seaplanes and flying boats to a greater extent than we have done in the past, for, as he says, it is a fact that a pilot prefers flying over land in a machine which can float, to flying over water in a machine which cannot

While "Air Facts and Problems" is not intended by the author to be regarded as a technical treatise on Aviation, it does nevertheless give some extraordinarily interesting statistics, as, for example, the horsepower miles, etc., flown by Imperial Airways under their new agreement with the Government

Parents seeking a career for their sons will find the details of the Cranwell Cadet College and the R A F Short Service Commissions of particular interest Lord Thomson deals with these in great detail and gives a syllabus of the work at Cranwell

The personal element, always so attractive in a book of this nature, is provided by the description of the author's flight to Arabia and back when he was Secretary of State for Air in 1924 This journey, which had as its objects the inspection of the Air Force Garrison in the Middle East and an official visit to Iraq, was accomplished in a Vickers "Vernon" machine, and, as may be supposed, Lord Thomson is an enthusiastic advocate of this new and rapid means of transit

The author devotes considerable space to urging the necessity of inculcating the air habit and air sense, and shows convincingly that these are fundamentals essential to Air Supremacy

In conclusion, "Air Facts and Problems" is an extraordinarily brilliant exposition of the problems confronting not only those engaged in Aviation, but also rulers and Governments the world over Lord Thomson, who in his varied career has been a soldier, diplomat, and statesman, deals with these problems from an essentially practical standpoint, incidentally providing a convincing rejoinder to the pessimistic conclusion reached by the author of "The Great Delusion"

"COMMERCIAL AIR TRANSPORT"

BY

Lieut-Col Ivo EDWARDS, C M G and F TYMMS, M C , A F R Ae S

With a Foreword by

Air Vice-Marshal SIR SEFTON BRANCKER, K C B , A F C

(Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 7s 6d)

"COMMERCIAL Air Transport" differs from "Air Facts and Problems" in regarding from a rather more technical and economic standpoint, the problems confronting Civil Aviation in this country, reviewing, at the same time, the progress made since the earliest days of flight

The chapter "State *versus* Private Operation" is very interesting The authors say "Air transport, to be successful, must be operated purely on a business basis, and nothing but business methods must find a place in its organization Political considerations must be eliminated" However heartily we may agree with the authors in this respect, we must admit that this has not been the case in

the past, for instance, there may be cited what become known as "The Nine Rules," which for years crippled Civil Aviation in Germany

Air transport is dealt with from the legal, economical and technical points of view, and in our opinion, "Commercial Air Transport" is a work which deserves to be carefully studied both by the executive and the technical directors of aerial transport companies

"THE ODD HINT TO THE R A F"

BY

WING COMMANDER

(John Hogg, 13, Paternoster Row)

THIS amusing little book is intended, as its name implies, to give a few subtle hints to officers of all ranks in the R A F

It starts with a few gentle suggestions to the Higher Command, on the question of encouraging officers to use their own initiative. One rather amusing extract may be quoted: "Remember that if you permit your officers no initiative, you can replace them easily by clerks, or, for the matter of that, by gramophones, and save the Service money thereby *Reductio ad absurdum!*"

Other observations worth quoting are

"A good officer should be capable of taking on at a moment's notice *any* job in connection with the Service"

"Women are the Devil when it comes to anything in connection with the Service, and the wife who runs the Station for you will damn your career just as effectively as would your speculation of a postage account"

"The man who says I could have done better if I had had better officers is worse than a knave—he is a fool"

"No commanding officer needs direct praise. All the glory or disgrace of his unit is his without his either grabbing it or disowning it"

"A station which has no football team or cricket team, and generally steers clear of games, is a poor sort of thing and very little use either to itself or to the Service"

"Many fellows think they are good officers solely because God in his goodness chose their parents for them. This is quite wrong. Officers are made, not born. A boiler maker in chef's costume is not necessarily a divine cook"

"Study your N C O's with the same interest you give to your officers. They are almost as important to you"

"Bad stunting is a useless bluff, because anyone who knows anything about flying will spot you at once, and the admiration of the 'Sweet young thing' although delightful will hardly assist you in your career"

"There is one curse which if permitted in the Service ruins efficiency as surely as uncontrolled drink, and introduces a thousand-and-one minor misfortunes sufficient to pave a primrose path for an army. And the name of this curse is—married junior officers"

Altogether, "The Odd Hint to the R A F" is really quite an amusing little book—if not taken too seriously