

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

By Lt.-Colonel J. T. C. Moore-Brabazon, M.C., M.P.

I am indeed proud to have the privilege of making the third Presidential Address to the Institution of Aeronautical Engineers, the more so in that in spite of the general depression throughout the country in all spheres of activity we find ourselves to-day in a stronger position as an institution than we have so far ever been. The Institution's work and activities are better known to the public and more interest and sympathy is being shown to us than a year ago, but the future of the aeronautical engineer requires all our energies and all our devotion if we are to succeed.

We have been helped, as in the past, by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, by a grant towards our funds; they see the necessity of our existence and have the vision and appreciation of the position to realise that a grant towards us is money well spent.

It is interesting to note along what lines advance has been made in aeronautics during the last year. First of all the astonishing development by the Americans of fast sea-going scouts shows that in this particular direction we are behind-hand. The rivalling or eclipsing of such feats as we saw performed by the Americans is, I maintain, due not to any inherent lack of designing power, but to shortage of funds and Government orders.

The advent of the small aeroplane with the low horse-power engine is a welcome one, and makes flight a possibility again for the private man, as until the advent of this particular machine it was obvious that the possession and operation of aeroplanes in general was passing into the hands of wealthy corporations and the Government alone. The encouragement of this form of machine is wholly desirable and the competitions to be held this year on the two-seated machines of this type will be watched and followed with interest, and is a question to which our members should devote very great attention.

The general situation as regards aeronautics in this country is, I believe, on the up-grade, and I notice for the first time that general alarm as regards our serious national position in the air is felt by the man in the street. The programme to meet the question of defence of these isles is not, perhaps, wholly satisfactory, but the powers that be are taking the first steps towards the rebuilding of an Air Force behind which we may, for the first time since the war, feel comparatively safe. The supply of machines and designs necessary therefor must have its reaction throughout the whole industry, and it is to be hoped that our Institution will feel the benefit.

Pure research is, in my opinion, not getting the attention it deserves. 'A

very great deal of work is behind-hand, nor can any real advance in the science of aeronautics be hoped for till the importance of research is appreciated and given the funds and detachment it deserves by the Government.

COLONEL MOORE-BRABAZON'S REMARKS FOLLOWING HIS PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

To-day the report stage of the Air Estimates comes on in the House of Commons. I had intended to open the discussion on the paper which Mr. Ashbolt is going to read, and it was the intention of Commander Burney to join in also. I saw him this afternoon, and he said that he very much wanted to come here to-night, but that there was an opportunity of impressing upon the House of Commons the very great importance of the lighter-than-air project, known as the Burney scheme.

We therefore concluded that it was best that he remained in the House of Commons advancing his views with people who did not agree with them, rather than with people who did.

I do think that the project appeals to the imagination of everybody who loves the Empire. By no other means can we bring ourselves closer together than by a quick system of transport. The aeroplane fulfils this need in bringing together the countries of Europe, but it cannot do the same from the point of view of the Empire. The only thing we can rely upon at present is the airship. Therefore, we must urge as much as we can the absolute necessity of getting on with an airship scheme. The sooner this is done, the better it will be for the whole Empire, and the closer we shall draw together, to become really much more of an homogeneous entity than we are at present.

I must therefore offer Mr. Ashbolt a very sincere apology on having to leave, but I am sure he will appreciate the reason. I know he will forgive me any discourtesy, remembering that I have tried to fulfil in the very best way the services towards aeronautics.