

CORRESPONDENCE

The Prudential Insurance Company of America.

Home Office: Newark, New Jersey,

January 5th, 1927.

COLONEL W. SEMPILL, *Chairman, Royal Aeronautical Society.*

Dear Mr. Sempill,—I read with much interest your letter to the *Times* of December 15th with reference to accidents in the R.A.F. You are entirely correct in your point of view regarding the urgency of more complete and trustworthy statistics and particularly as regards the ratio of fatalities to flying hours. I have for several years been engaged in the study of aviation fatalities in the United States and Canada through the co-operation of our military and naval authorities and the Royal Air Force of Canada. I have also been concerned with accidents in commercial aviation at home and abroad.

It has occurred to me that possibly you might be willing to extend to me the privilege of an interview when I shall be in England this summer during the latter part of June to attend the International Actuarial Congress. I expect to have letters of introduction from General Patrick and Assistant Secretary MacCracken, as well as Admiral Moffett, to the local authorities in England, but perhaps you can assist me in my efforts to obtain a clearer understanding of the British situation. I am sure you will agree with me that as long as insurance companies are extremely reluctant to accept risks on pilots and mechanics, commercial aviation cannot be expected to make the progress anticipated. It seems to me of the very first importance that the public should arrive at a better understanding of the true nature of the hazards, which individually considered, are under safe conditions of flying practically negligible. We fly in this country over a million miles to a fatality in the Air Mail Service and even in the Army and Navy the risk is by no means as serious, as a matter of fact, as is generally assumed to be the case. The greatest difficulty in dealing with the subject statistically rests upon the small number of men concerned. If we had one hundred times the flying operations which we have at present, it goes without saying that the actual number of fatalities would probably not be more than ten times what it is at present. In other words, the risk factor is conditioned by the number of operations. The more extended the operations the less will be the true ratio of fatalities.

It is regrettable that the British Government should never have published data corresponding to our own military and naval statistics. All of these are available in published form.

Anticipating the pleasure of making your personal acquaintance, I remain,

Very truly yours,

FREDERICK L. HOFFMAN.

To the Editor of the JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL AERONAUTICAL SOCIETY.

Dear Sir,—We note that in the February issue of your Journal, you published on page 166 an extract from "La Revue Pétrolière" in regard to lubricating oils.

In this extract various brands of lubricating oil are mentioned, but we regret