

appendicitis at this point but Macmillan and Malins carried on to Calcutta, thus completing our first stage.

The Fairey seaplane had been erected for us by Major Kemp and mechanics of the R.A.F., but the floats leaked. Nevertheless, owing to the urgency of matters, Macmillan and Malins got off, but were wrecked in the Bay of Bengal, off Chittagong, narrowly escaping with their lives.

Thus ended the first attempt to fly round the world. We received the greatest kindness and help from all the foreign nations on our route and from the R.A.F. I have nothing but the highest praise for the work of the Aircraft Disposal Co., who got our D.H.9 ready so quickly, whilst had it not been for the excellent piloting of Macmillan we should not have got as far as we did. Malins, in addition to his camera work, proved that he was a first-rate mechanic.

In conclusion I should like to express my appreciation of the work done for us by the Royal Air Force in Egypt, Palestine, Iraq and India, in particular for the loan of R.A.F. mechanics, who, at Calcutta, working under the supervision of Major Kemp, by permission of the Indian Air Board and the Air Officer Commanding in Egypt, erected the Fairey seaplane against our arrival. I would like to contradict the impression that I complained about this work. I have nothing but the deepest gratitude and praise for the work done under extremely difficult circumstances.

The R.A.F. carried us almost the whole way from Egypt to Calcutta.

DISCUSSION.

COLONEL BELAIEW.—Can the lecturer give us any information as to the possibilities of flying over the Sahara?

MAJOR BLAKE.—I think that would be largely a question of petrol supply. If you could fly out of the bumps there would probably be no great discomfort. You would want a machine suited to the climate, and a very reliable engine. Desert flying is not at all comfortable in hot weather, but in most cases it is not impossible. The Air Force track across the Arabian desert was made in case of forced landings. If the machine comes down on the track, all rescuing machines have to do is to follow the track until the stranded aeroplane is reached. If it was off the track it would be impossible to find it in the surrounding desert. I certainly think that the difficulties of desert flying are not insurmountable.

MR. HOWARD-FLANDERS.—At what height are the bumps over the desert washed out?

MAJOR BLAKE.—I did not discover on this trip, but during the war I have been very badly bumped at 10,000 feet. Over the South of Palestine, near Jericho, a machine was turned on to its back with one bump. To avoid the bumps you would probably have to get somewhere near 15,000 to 20,000 feet.

The Chairman proposed a very hearty vote of thanks to Major Blake for a most interesting lecture, which was passed unanimously. In responding, the lecturer said that he was glad to have had the opportunity of giving his lecture before the Institution, and of paying an unqualified tribute of praise to the assistance which had been rendered by the Royal Air Force to himself and his companions during their expedition.

The meeting then closed.