

The Journal of
THE HELICOPTER ASSOCIATION
OF GREAT BRITAIN

VOL 5 No 3

October—November—December 1951

PRICE 10/6

THE HELICOPTER ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN

THE FIFTH ANNUAL DINNER

The President J G WEIR, C M G , C B E , F R A E S , *in the Chair*

Ninety-eight Members and Guests assembled at Londonderry House on Friday, 31st August. Earlier that evening most of these had attended the lecture by Mr FRANK PIASECKI, which, coming so soon after that by Mr SIKORSKI, had undoubtedly put everybody into a very forward looking frame of mind.

In proposing the Toast of "our Guests" the President said that the pleasure we always feel in welcoming our friends from America was all the greater on this occasion since Mr PIASECKI is not only a great leader of the American Helicopter Industry, but is also a Past-President of the American Helicopter Society. We had heard so much lately, and indeed that very afternoon, about the warlike possibilities of the helicopter but, as our principle guest was the Chairman of British European Airways Corporation, he now hoped to be given some inkling of its more peaceful future. Mr Weir then explained that he would soon be handing over his office to Mr ERIC MENS-FORTH, whose term as President was likely to coincide with a period of considerable expansion of our activities, and he took this opportunity of wishing his friend every success in guiding the Association's footsteps. Of that expansion he now hoped to hear something from LORD DOUGLAS of KIRTLESIDE, with whose name he proposed to couple the Toast.

LORD DOUGLAS replied in a speech both most encouraging and highly provocative. He told us that the Corporation was waiting for large helicopters, a three passenger machine was useless as a commercial proposition and what he wanted was a "Green Line Bus" seating thirty or forty. The Corporation was asking for this to be developed, but other people had not

been so clear about what they wanted and the Industry had been very slow over development. He would like to see our cities linked, centre to centre, by helicopter services, and thought this to be possible in seven or eight years time, but a speed up was necessary all round.

Mr S SCOTT-HALL, Director General of Technical Development at the Ministry of Supply, proposed "the Association". He began with some friendly banter addressed to certain of our Executive Officers and then, turning serious, referred to the great loss to the helicopter world, and to Aviation as a whole, sustained by the death of ALAN MARSH, the Association's first Chairman. Continuing in a mood of gravity he elaborated a plea for closer co-operation within the Industry, and for a pooling of ideas. This speech appears to have caused some comment and doubts have been expressed as to the desirability, or even the possibility, of such a cards-on-the-table approach. Mr Scott-Hall has, however, now clarified his meaning in the Press and has stated that what he was suggesting was not in anyway intended as a curb upon Individual enterprise, but that he had in mind that kind of mutual help towards the solution of problems, by a pooling of experience, which was afforded to engine development by the Gas Turbine Collaboration Committee.

The reply to this Toast was made by Mr PETER MASEFIELD, who, so far from excusing the Association for making this such a B E A C occasion, let the cat right out of the bag—disclosing a plot to encircle D G T D by a "pincer movement" concerted between himself and Lord Douglas. He went on to illumine the latter's black and white into gorgeous technicolour with bouquets for everyone, most particularly for B E A's Experimental Unit, but expressed the hope that the word "experimental" would soon be deleted. They were indeed awaiting that forty seater bus, but meantime he expected that "the B 173 would give Nero something to fiddle with," but not, he hoped, "while the clutches burned!" This jest was very much to everyone's taste and so was his charming little example of the Height of Security, as realised one morning recently, when a certain Very Important Person found in his basket a document, much sealed, bearing the grading "D B R," meaning "Destroy Before Reading." Affairs having now approached a suitable stage of levity, a call was made upon Mr J S SHAPIRO who took us once again into his confidence with a report on the results of some of his most recent researches into human, and feminine behaviour which encouraged him to propose the Toast with which it is our habit to wind up these proceedings. The challenge was taken up by Mrs THEILMANN who, discarding his taunts, replied so sweetly as completely to vindicate the ascendancy of her sex in all such arguments. After this the official proceedings being declared to be at an end the party broke up into animated discussion groups.

(Photograph reproduced by courtesy of The Aeroplane)

