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EDITORIAL

THE CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH.

AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

It has become the custom for the Chairman of the Council of this Association to address the members at the conclusion of the business of the Annual General Meeting, which as you know is really a meeting held solely for the purpose of acquainting members with the general state of the affairs of the Association. As the printed report of the Council conveys the essential matter for the information of members, I propose, this afternoon, to content myself with a brief and informal talk, reviewing certain events of the past year and mentioning some of the achievements and contributions made by members to the advancement of the helicopter.

I must first speak of the sad loss of our Chairman, HENRY ALAN MARSH, and his co-pilot, Frederick JOHN CABLE, who, with JOE UNSWORTH, their engineer, lost their lives in June last year when the Air-Horse which they were testing met with disaster. Your Council honoured me with an invitation to occupy the vacant office of Chairman, an invitation which I accepted in all humility, having regard to the high standard set by our old friend and Chairman, ALAN MARSH.

All forms of pioneering seem to be accompanied by loss of human life, but I question whether any other branch of the industry can point to such a small number of lives lost in the course of development of the product as against the enormous number of lives that have happily been saved. I do not for one moment suggest that such skilled and experienced men as Alan Marsh and his crew have any equal: I do not believe that to be so. Nevertheless, it is most heartening to hear of the wonderful record of mercy flights made by helicopters in Malaya, Indo-China and Korea, where up to the end of 1950 some 1,200 men had been lifted from the battle area and taken behind the lines for medical attention and safe return to their units.

During 1950, two successful experiments in passenger carrying were completed in the United Kingdom. The first, between London and Birmingham, was set up by two private concerns, namely Westland Aircraft Limited and Rotor Stations Limited, and a second, between Cardiff and Liverpool, operated by British European Airways after a long period of study and careful planning. In both cases Sikorsky S.51 or Westland S.51 aircraft were used.

Both your President and I were invited to travel as passengers on the inaugural flight between Liverpool/Cardiff/Liverpool, and fortunately I was permitted to purchase the first ticket issued by the Corporation. Later, the

outward half was presented to the Helicopter Association and the return half to the Royal Aeronautical Society. The Secretary of the Royal Aeronautical Society, Captain LAURENCE PRITCHARD in acknowledging the gift, suggested that it was symbolic of the relationship between the Society and the Association in that each are two halves of a whole body of people whose only thought is the advancement of flying.

Another event of the year was the award to the Fairey Aviation Company of an important development contract from the Ministry of Supply, for a helicopter equipped with turbo-propeller engines and seating between twenty and thirty passengers. The construction of the Bristol 173 twin engine twin rotor helicopter is proceeding, and our latest news is that test flying may commence within the course of the next few weeks, while the Bristol 171 Mk. 3 has recently been granted its Certificate of Airworthiness.

Using Westland Sikorsky S.51 helicopters, the Royal Navy successfully completed deck landing trials on H.M.S. *Duquesne*. The success attained may result in extensive use of helicopters for convoy protection and anti-submarine work.

Also in the military field, Westland Aircraft Limited have entered into an arrangement which will allow for the manufacture, under licence, of the Sikorsky S.55 ten-seater in this country, and there is no doubt that this aircraft has an immense and interesting future.

Yet another important development is to be seen with the successful conclusion of trials by the Olympic Whaling Company, trials involving the use of helicopters for whale spotting. It is understood from our friend and member, ALAN BRISTOW, who was in charge of this experiment, that the result was highly satisfactory and that further important developments are now under consideration. We congratulate Alan Bristow on the recent award of the Croix de Guerre for his work with helicopters on rescue and military missions in Indo-China. He already holds the Royal Aero Club Silver Medal, in recognition of his skill and determination which resulted in the successful re-victualling operation at the Wolf Rock Lighthouse in February, 1948. It was my privilege to bring this feat to the notice of the Royal Aero Club Committee.

In the world wide battle for food, it is highly satisfactory to know that the helicopter team of Pest Control Limited, headed by JAMES HARPER, continues to play a vital part, having established what is virtually an helicopter flying squad capable of being taken, as a unit, by air to the scene of operations whether it be war against the colorado beetle in Europe, tsetse fly in Africa, or the cotton pest in the Sudan.

We note with tremendous satisfaction that in all these world-wide operations our members have played their many and varied parts in the design teams, amongst the pilots, maintenance engineers and operational staffs.

The rate of intake to the Association is by no means high enough for us to feel that we need not continue to exert all efforts in recruitment, and I would wish that everyone of us during the coming year will make every effort to enlist and propose at least one if not two new members. In this way the Association could attain full financial strength and increase its technical resources considerably.

I cannot speak too highly of the encouragement and support which

your President, Mr. WEIR, has given to us all. His zeal and enthusiasm for the future of the helicopter and the Association is a splendid stimulus. I would also like to express our appreciation and thanks to your keen and seemingly tireless Honorary Secretary, Major RICHARDSON, who unfortunately is not with us today because duty requires his presence elsewhere.

As you will know, the business of this Association is carried out in the most economical way possible. This will be apparent to anyone who examines the balance sheet and report closely. The burden of the office work falls upon Miss MACPHEE, whose selfless interest in the Association has been the means of carrying us over quite a number of those major and minor crises which an Association such as our own quite often has to face during the course of the year, and Miss MACPHEE has been ably assisted in this work by Miss MANN, who entered the service of the Association some 18 months or so ago.

Miss MACPHEE and Miss MANN are the only two persons who receive any salary in payment for their services. The whole of the work of the Council and of your Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and so on is entirely voluntary, and this is some indication to you of the enthusiasm with which your Council tackles the many delicate problems of management which arise from time to time, for, of course, in effect they are a board of management who work in accordance with the wishes of the membership towards extending the sphere of interest and the activities of the Association.

The major firms in the industry continue their financial support in the form of donations, and their action is keenly appreciated by the Executive Council and the membership. This opportunity is taken to mention the names of the Companies who are aiding us in this way The Bristol Aeroplane Company Limited, the Cierva Autogiro Company Limited, Fairey Aviation Company Limited, and the Westland Aircraft Limited.

Before closing these words I am able to tell you that some of our more fortunate members were able to visit the United States quite recently to study the great advances made in the helicopter industry of America, and the Council extended an invitation to Mr. ROWE and Mr. WIGDORTCHIK to represent the Helicopter Association at the Annual Forum of the American Helicopter Society. At the last Annual General Meeting, we invited Mr. WIGDORTCHIK to relate some of his impressions of the American industry, and I propose within a few moments, to extend to Mr. ROWE and Mr. WIGDORTCHIK invitations to talk informally of what they saw in America during their recent visits, and to Mr. BRISTOW to talk about his impressions gained in Indo-China and the Antarctic. I suggest to them a limit of ten minutes each, and at the conclusion, if anyone of you would care to make a similar and further contribution, or even to ask questions, I am sure that they will make every endeavour to reply.

I thank you Ladies and Gentlemen for listening so attentively, and also for the support and interest which you have given to the affairs of the Helicopter Association during the past twelve months.