



PHILIP WILLIS, the English glider expert who established a new British height record over Mount Cook at the end of December

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under beautiful conditions, and just before dark was able to make one long glide back to Harewood."

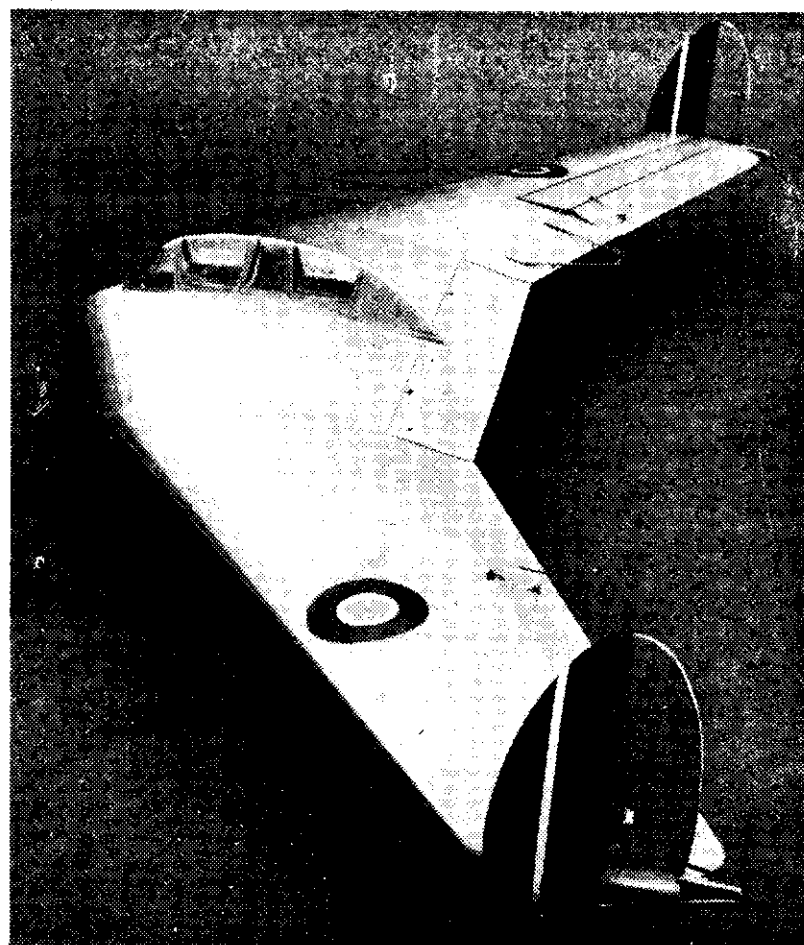
Among other discoveries made that day by Mr. Georgeson when he took his sailplane into unknown territories was that the top of the wave-lift may extend well above its lenticular cloud. It is this sort of knowledge, an ability to read from visible and tactile signs—where the air is dead, where turbulent,

where rising, where descending—that distinguishes between a good and a mediocre sailplane pilot. In the nature of things there are no bad sailplane pilots. (Incidentally, "sailplane" is the name for a glider which can soar, that is, which can gain height after launching by using updraughts.)

Apart from its sporting value, soaring also has considerable practical value, for instance, in collecting data of value to meteorologists and for training pilots for certain kinds of work. On this, Mr. Georgeson says, "It has been suggested that training in sailplanes would enable topdressing pilots to get a clear picture of the behaviour of air associated with hills. Pilots without much experience of hill flying who take up aerial top-dressing are sometimes caught in downdraughts which, had they had greater experience, they would have avoided."

To get the best from New Zealand conditions, sailplaning needs public interest and support. For instance, in Britain any youth who wants to take on soaring can get some experience in the A.T.C. at public expense. With such support over here, New Zealand might well turn out world rankers, especially in breaking height records, as Mr. Willis's flight proved.

RIGHT: Indicative of the serious attention paid to unpowered flight in Britain is this picture of an Armstrong Whitworth A.W.52G tailless glider used by the R.A.F.



J. G. S. GRANT: *His Life and Hard Times*

"WE have no desire to become the Prime Minister of the Barracouta Pahs of New Zealand. It would be no honour to us. . .

"Our Character is beyond the contemptible aspersions of Otago editors. We challenge all Dunedin to point out in our character one single moral flaw, frailty or infirmity. . .

"I have now despaired of getting an office of honour or usefulness in Otago. The course pursued by me has been conscientious, but it has rendered me obnoxious to the powers that be. I must tell you plainly that I am now literally penniless. . .

There, in the undying words of the man himself, are epitomised some of the



Turnbull Library photograph

JULIUS VOGEL

high and low lights of the life and hard times of J. G. S. Grant, the *Colonial Diogenes*, who will be discussed by Neil Meredith from 4YC during the next few weeks. A Scot who was educated at Aberdeen, at New College, Edinburgh University, and at the University of St. Andrews—where he won a prize in political economy and moral philosophy—Grant was one of the stormier figures of the Edinburgh of the South from the time he arrived there as a very young man. Though first the local press paid great attention to what he had to say in his frequent sermons, lectures and orations, the time was to come (alas!) when his own journal—for he had, of course, to start one—would be mentioned primly by the *Otago Daily Times* as "a publication to which we are not in the habit of referring in these columns." But that wasn't the worst that could happen. He had a spell in prison, he was prosecuted by no less a person than Mr. Julius Vogel in the first criminal libel case in the history of New Zealand, and once, in the dead of night, the Chief Inspector of Police, whose alleged shortcomings he had criticised, attacked him physically, striking him "a murderous blow on the forehead, over the brain." Yes, the police had their critics even in those days; and after that particular incident Mr. Grant opened another bottle of double strength vitriol: "Dunedin . . . is socially and morally rotten at the core. . . Ruffianism now stalks abroad on its main thoroughfare, with visage unabashed."



J. G. S. GRANT—as he appeared, in 1855, to a contemporary cartoonist

(It sounded like a pun.) "Fighting the people's battle, we received a mortal wound, which shall follow us to our grave. . . The very stones from out the walls shall yet cry out for vengeance."

The journal in which J. G. S. Grant's most weighty public utterances are preserved, which was published in Dunedin on and off from 1864 to 1871, gloried

in the name of the *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Philosophy, Science and the Arts*. Mr. Grant's reasons for starting the paper were straightforward enough. In general he had found the colonial press "vapid and feckless," and having long aspired to embark in "the editorial vessel of journalism," he spread out his sails before the propitious gales on the troubled waters of politics and social questions. After all, as his editorial afterthought had it, "A paper that shall command respect ought to be wielded by a scholar, a man deeply read, and labouring under the inspiration of genius." And when it came to comparing his own *Saturday Review* (brief title) with the London *Saturday Review*—"unquestionably the most intellectual journal in Europe"—it wasn't surprising that he should find "in all humility" that the style of the Dunedin journal was "as superior to that of the London, as the climate of Dunedin is superior to the dense fogs of the British Brick Babel."

Yes—there are no two ways about it—Mr. Grant fought the good fight with a will, sparing no one. He withered with scorn "all self-inflated frogs—official, mercantile or editorial," he attacked "useless civic service snobs whose arduous work consists in coming to their offices at twelve noon after pouring a quart of macassar oil over their empty pates," he inveighed against the Demon Drink and once called on an audience to hoist their flag emblazoned with the watchword of the 19th Century, "Grog—the Root of All Evil"; and so on. . .

Colonel Diogenes will start from 4YC on Thursday, February 3, at 7.40 p.m.