

Science will Plot our Commercial Tradeways in the Air

THIRTY-ODD years ago the world commenced the development of its sea legs. Commerce, and the competitive spirit among nations, developed their proportions until at length they were sturdy enough to obviate anything more than occasional overhauling. And when the Great Nightmare of 1914-18 had faded, the world settled into active contemplation, searching avidly for the new idea.

Throughout the four years of war, the mind of the world had figuratively dwelt high in the clouds—some nationals filled with the hope of world dominance, others with terrifying apprehension of winged terrors, which at night hurled their projectiles from the black envelope of night that spread above a quaking earth.

With war's collapse, the face of the world was changed by marking division and secession, but the mind had achieved what might be called an aerial awareness, and even as sea legs were nourished to withstand the stress of international competition, so did the British Empire visualise itself as the literal and future empire of the clouds.

Commerce took wings. Where once its ambassadors wallowed in the trough of oceans they now swooped through the heavens, shortening the gap between purchaser in Vienna and vendor in Glasgow; exchanging personal relationships for the erstwhile doubtful effectiveness of spasmodic correspondence, or establishing overnight trade associations which hitherto might have taken two weeks to effect.

The vocabulary of distance has changed from equations of hundred-miles to terms of hours, from the one-time complex of transport in form which changed every few-score miles, to the safe and incredibly fast simplicity of travel through the air.

NEW ZEALAND is no less enterprising in air thought than its nationals have been in effecting many other forward movements, and New Zealanders have been quick with the realisation of what significance lies behind the plotting of tradeways in the air.

At an opportune time, of course, since in a youthful country the major argument confronting new moves must be "Is the time right, are we ready; can we stand the strain of this new expense?"

Hence it is only within, say, the immediate past five years that this country has seriously focused its attention upon the subject of aerial tradeways and its associate questions.

The key word of life in 1930 is *Expedition*. Gone are the times of leisurely transmission, whether it be goods

or communications. The business man who now is content with spending two days in travel from Auckland to Invercargill will shortly find himself an anachronism, following laboriously behind his competitor who travels by air.

When Sir Thomas Wilford was Minister of Defence he was quick to appreciate the potential worth of commercial airways in New Zealand, and through his enthusiasm many aero clubs throughout the country achieved noteworthy bulk in membership. Extensive lists of flying tyros form the stimulus for public comment, with its inevitable invasion of commercial schedules and a resultant expedition in trade and trading utilities.

We have the vision, we have the realisation that within the next two years business men will cease to be satisfied with present transport systems, and there is ample enthusiasm. The one thing lacking—capital—will be furnished as soon as the present temporary financial uneasiness expires.

Before long, and because of the quick upthrust given by amateur flying, this country should be able to indicate in terms of no uncertain pride the flourishing condition of its merchant airways.

AND how does this affect radio? with the advent of trade and passenger traffic in the air a specialist branch will need to be created, a section which, in collaboration with the Meteorological Office, will enable planes to fly through dense fogs and in the dead of night, without fear of collision or lost bearings.

Radio beacons will provide these unfailing signposts, ever pointing in the right direction, immeasurably safe. These aerial signboards are heedless of wind and storm, they cannot be disfigured so as to misdirect the traveller, but will bring him comforting advice as he listens for their automatic instruction.

The Meteorological Office will be called upon to furnish daily bulletins about the weather "up aloft," so that with this dual safeguard commercial aviation will be well equipped against possible misadventure.

THE late war, fearful though it was, gave wings to commerce, but in providing swifter means of transit from town to town, from continent to continent, it also taught civilisation that without sight and hearing aeronautics was a hapless, blundering method.

Hence the need for the radio lighthouse, and the special branch of meteorology, plotting the upper pathways of the air, showing the airman all the (Concluded on page 2.)



DR. KIDSON,
Government Meteorologist, whose department will play a significant part in aerial commerce.
—S. P. Andrew, photo.