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"SWISSAIR" MACHINES OVER LONDON.

The well-known radio tune "*He flies through the air with the greatest of ease*" came back to my mind, after I had completed a most enjoyable flight over London on Tuesday last, which lasted about 25 minutes.

Hardly had the comfortable coach, which took us from the Airway Terminus, Victoria, disembarked its precious load when we were invited by courteous officials to board one of the famous Douglas D.C.2 machines, with which the Swissair Company are initiating their Zurich-London service on April 1st.

Having flown to Switzerland and back on a previous occasion, I was, of course, not quite a novice, but I was every bit as excited when I stepped into this comfortable machine, as I was some 9 months ago, when I "took to the air" for the first time.

Before I actually describe the flight over the great metropolis, I would like to give my readers a short description of the very up-to-date machines with which the "Swissair" Company is inaugurating their new service.

The Douglas D.C.2 machines, of which the Company has purchased from the U.S.A., four machines at a cost of 330,000 frs. each, represent the latest development in aircraft design; unexcelled passengers comfort has been the paramount consideration in the development of the new air liner.

The passengers compartment is thoroughly sound insulated so that a conversation can be held in an ordinary tone without any interference from the noise of the engines; it provides the utmost roominess and comfort for 14 passengers. The chairs are comfortably upholstered, and fully adjustable for reclining or reversing to face the passenger behind. They are mounted in rubber to minimise vibration and have arm rests, foot rests and removable head rest cushions. Each seat has a separate window, thus enabling each individual passenger to have an excellent view; in addition, every seat is provided with a reading lamp, ash tray (as smoking is permitted), literature pocket, portable lunch tray, call button, ventilation control, etc.

A highly satisfactory ventilating and steam heating system is provided. Air is admitted through a vent in the nose of the fuselage and transmitted by ducts to the pilots' and passengers' compartment and to the lavatory. The capacity of the system permits the entire air content of the salon to be changed each minute, and a thermostat maintains the temperature at 70° F. even when the outside air is as cold as 20° below zero.

The air is heated by passing through a radiator under the floor, which is served by steam pipes from a boiler installed in the left engine exhaust collector. This method of ventilation and heat control eliminates all possibility of noxious engine gases entering the ventilation system.

Companion to this luxury is the new performance standard established by the Douglas Transport. With twin 710 h.p. supercharged engines, and controllable pitch propellers, the high speed at 8,000 feet altitude is 210 m.p.h. With the Douglas Air Brakes the landing speed is reduced to 58 m.p.h. and under single engine power the plane easily rises from a take off to a height of 9,000 feet without exceeding the engines normal operation limits.

A cargo compartment having a mail capacity of 1,000 pounds is located just forward of the passengers' compartment at the right side of the fuselage. Its door opens into a companionway running along the left side of the fuselage between the pilots' and passengers' compartment. Mail or other cargo is loaded through a special outside door provided in the left wall of the companionway directly opposite the cargo compartment door.

Aft of the salon is located the passengers' baggage compartment of 112 cub. ft. capacity, where additional mail also may be stowed if desired. An exterior door on the left side of the fuselage provides ground access to this compartment and it can be reached in flight by stepping through a doorway from the lavatory. Both of these compartments are equipped with dome lights.

The roomy and conveniently arranged pilots' compartment has adjustable arm chairs and a windshield carefully designed to eliminate reflections and glare. The chairs can be tilted or moved vertically and are fully upholstered. The movable shutterproof glass panels which form the windshield may be cleaned externally while in flight. Due to the location of the compartment well forward of the wing, the pilots have entirely un-

obstructed vision. The landing wheels can be readily seen when they are in the extended position.

A complete set of controls is provided for each pilot independently and the columns supporting the control wheels are offset to swing close to the side walls, thus permitting easy access to the seats. A full set of ultra modern instruments is installed in group arrangement to facilitate rapid scanning. Accessibility for serving is provided through a hinged cover in the fuselage nose, giving entrance to a compartment forward of the cockpit. The instrument panel itself is mounted on flexible rubbed bushings carefully placed to minimize vibration. Indirect lighting with rheostat control is provided.

The Sperry Gyroscopic Automatic Pilot (airhydraulic type) is installed to release the pilot from the strain of flying and to enable him to do navigation work to a far greater extent than it was possible some years ago.

The Douglas Air Brakes — split trailing edge flaps — are built into the lower side of the wing to increase the lift and drag for slow, restricted landings. The flaps are continuous from ailerons to aileron beneath the fuselage, and when hinged full down cause a gain in lift of 35% and a drag increase of 300%. The reduction in landing speed is approximately 10 miles per hour. The Air Brakes are operated by a hydraulic system controlled from the cockpit.

Dimensions and Weights of the aircraft.

Length	62 ft.
Span	85 ft.
Height	16 ft.
Weight empty	12,000 lbs.
Useful Load	5,880 lbs.
Gross Weight	17,880 lbs.
Performances of the aircraft.	
Maximum speed	210 m.p.h.
Cruising speed	180 m.p.h.
Landing speed	58 m.p.h.
Service ceiling	23,600 ft.
Absolute ceiling	25,400 ft.

And now to the flight itself: hardly had we taken our seats when the roar of the engines could be dimly heard, and the machine taxied across the field to its "taking off" place; a short signal and the engines began to turn at top speed, after a short run the wheels, which I eagerly watched, left the ground, and circling over the Aerodrome, we speedily gained height. Those of our friends whom we had left only a few minutes ago, suddenly began to look like little pin heads, higher and higher we climbed, the houses with their thousands and thousands of chimney stacks began to look smaller and smaller, the miles and miles of arterial roads could be clearly detected, they looked like big ribbons enveloping the open space. Little rivers and small lakes glittered in the sun like diamonds.

The first big landmark we could spot was the Crystal Palace, whose thousands of window panes scintillated in the rays of the sun; suddenly through a mist we could see the river Thames appear with its winding courses, and the Houses of Parliament looking like a child's toy. We followed the Thames as far as London Bridge; St. Paul's Cathedral, the Bank and various railway stations and the docks loaded with vessels were clearly discernable. In the distance one could see Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens appearing like small green patches; the Battersea Power station with its large chimney stacks presented an imposing sight; as far as the eye could see nothing but houses upon houses presenting a rather drab appearance. A little tap on the back made me look round, it was the wireless operator who asked me to come into the pilot's cabin: the numerous instruments made a most impressive show and many of their uses were explained to me, I was also informed that we were travelling at a speed of 185 m.p.h. at a height of 3,500 feet. I felt as if in a dream, what a wonderful job these pilots have, I thought on leaving the cabin, to glide through the ether, heavenwards far above the turmoil of a large city, unhampered by Belisha Beacons and Police traps in the glorious freedom of the air.

But there was no time for such reflections, already in the distance one could see the control tower of the Croydon Air port, the engines began to slacken and within a few minutes we landed again at the aerodrome after a flight which alas did not last long enough. It was certainly an experience which will leave behind vivid memories, and later on when we were royally entertained at the Air Port Hotel, experiences amongst the numerous passengers were enthusiastically exchanged.

Apart from the numerous journalists, (well over a hundred) several of our compatriots took part in the flight in the two machines. The Legation was represented by Dr. Rüfenacht and Mr. Hilfiker; Mr. Senn and Mr. Suter, Presidents of the City Swiss Club and the N.S.H. respectively "went up together." (Mr. Steinmann, President of the Swiss Mercantile Society was unable to attend). The Swiss Federal Railways sent Messrs. Gassmann and Ernst, and the Swiss Press included Dr. Kessler, (Neue Zürcher Zeitung); Dr. Egli (Bund) and Mr. Stauffer (Swiss Observer).

A sumptuous tea was served, and those who preferred cocktails could indulge at lib.

The company was full of praise for what they had seen, and for the "Swissair" Company Major Nabholz is to be heartily congratulated on the efficient arrangement of this very interesting demonstration flight. Let us hope that it will be a good augury for the new service, which we trust will get the wholehearted support of our countrymen both here and at home.

ST.

THE SWISS MINISTER AS GUEST OF THE "SWISSAIR."

Major Nabholz of the "Swissair" acted as host to the Swiss Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini on Monday last at a Luncheon Party at Browns Hotel. The company, which included Madame Paravicini, the principal pilots of the "Swissair," and representatives of the "Imperial Airways" and the Air Ministry were later on driven to the Croydon Aerodrome, where one of the new Douglas D.C.2 machines was boarded, and a flight, lasting 40 minutes, with an intermediate landing at the Heston Aerodrome where the various Establishments and machines were inspected, was taken.

The Minister was accompanied during the flight by Madame Paravicini, Mlle. J. Paravicini, Monsieur Ch. de Jenner, Monsieur W. de Bourg, Counsellors of Legation and officials of the Imperial Airways and the Air Ministry.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.

The Swiss Mercantile Society held its Monthly Meeting at Swiss House on Wednesday, March 13th.

In the unavoidable absence of the President, Mr. A. Steinmann, Mr. J. J. Boos, Vice-President, was in the Chair. The Meeting was honoured by the presence of Dr. W. Rüfenacht, First Secretary of Legation, who takes a very keen interest in the activities of the Society.

The members were asked to reserve Monday, April 15th, when our famous compatriot, Mr. W. Mittelholzer, will address them on his epic flights to the Cape, Persia, Spitzbergen, etc. The lecture, which will be illustrated, will be held in conjunction with the Nouvelle Société Helvétique and the City Swiss Club at King George's Hall, Caroline Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.C.1, on Monday, April 15th.

This season's air-service to London of the "Swissair" will start on April 1st with a greatly speeded up schedule of 3½ hours for the single journey. It will enable passengers to travel to London and back on the same day. The lecture by our famous airman will no doubt make us more than ever air-minded, for it is this means which brings us, metaphorically speaking, in even closer proximity to our homeland.

On the termination of the Monthly Meeting all adjourned into the lecture room where the Chairman introduced Mr. Oliver E. Simmonds, M.A., F.R.Ae.S., M.I.Ae.E., M.P., who addressed the audience on "Flying around the Ancient Worlds." The students of the College were invited to this lecture and the lecture room was comfortably filled.

Mr. Simmonds, who is a pilot of nearly 20 years' standing and was largely responsible for the design of the famous racing seaplane, S.5., which won the Schneider Trophy for Britain, is Honorary Secretary of the Parliamentary Air Committee and a Member of the Council of the Royal Aeronautical Society. Mr. Simmonds showed himself a worthy exponent of a nation which has done outstanding pioneer work in both civil and commercial aviation.

Mr. Simmonds vividly depicted his flight by seaplane from Brindisi to Greece, the Aegean Islands, Rhodes, Egypt and Palestine. A series of exquisite coloured slides which were taken on the flight greatly enhanced the lecturer's story of the trip. He interspersed his singular narrative with many humorous incidents. In fact, the lecture was full of good humour and exceedingly instructive both from a geographical and historical point of view apart from proving the immense advantages of modern travelling. The audience had a bird's eye view of a sunrise over the Mediterranean, ancient historic cities and monuments in various continents, animal life in the Nile valley, biblical