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Autor: W.D.
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The Tremendous Speed of Modern Air Traffic

1926-1935

(National Zeitung, 21.3.35)

On April 10th, 1926, the writer travelled by rail through France, Luxembourg and Belgium to Holland, a journey which took 15 hours, in order to accompany the first five Fokker F. III machines, which were purchased by the "Luftverkehrsgesellschaft" "Balair," to their new home. They were destined for the Air Traffic Service of the "BALAIR" and consisted of blue painted single deckers, with a wing span of about 15 m. The body of these machines was constructed with specially manufactured steel tubes which provided a certain elasticity. The petrol tanks, containing about 350 litres, were lodged in the wings, and the machines were fitted with new English Siddeley-Puma engines (water cooled) with a total horse power of 220. Owing to their great reliability, these machines were extensively used both in military and civil aviation. The flight from Rotterdam via Cologne to Basle, covering a distance of 700 km., took at that time nearly five hours.—

Nearly nine years have elapsed since that memorable day. The present flight from Basle to London was able to prove what an enormous progress has since been made in the sphere of aviation, a progress which amply confirms the time honoured adage that "time is money," as far as the business man, as well as the diplomat is concerned. The Management of the "SWISSAIR" is to be congratulated on their achievements, especially as far as speed and security is concerned; they have successfully proved that they need not fear any foreign competition in the field of aviation.—

Shortly before a hooter announced the imminent arrival of our machine, we had already spotted the "Silver Bird" travelling at a great height; suddenly we heard the engine being switched off, and in a remarkably short time, which evoked our admiration, the machine made graceful contact with mother earth. The two experienced pilots of the "SWISSAIR" Nyffenegger and Zimmermann, to whose efficient pilotage, thousands of passengers have already entrusted their lives, alighted from the cockpit. Amongst the invited guests who were assembled at the Aerodrome was Colonel Messmer, President of the Swiss-Aero-Club. The President of the "SWISSAIR," Dr. Ehinger, who was unfortunately unable to join the flight to London was also present on the "Sternenfeld." The engines then began to roar and at 12.30 the

START FROM BASLE

was made.

The powerful force of the two 710 h.p. engines was soon noticeable, and we could feel the rapid increase of speed. Special attention was paid to the weather conditions. A sea of white clouds

which tried to bar our way suddenly seemed to evaporate and enabled us to have an undisturbed view over the extended chains of the Swiss Alps, thus presenting an unforgettable view before our eyes.

Pilot Zimmermann now puts the automatic pilot (robot pilot) into operation, which releases him from the strain of flying, and enables him to direct his attention to navigation work. M. Nyffenegger, who is acting as *conferencier* informs the passengers that the machine is now travelling at a speed of 270 km. p. h. at a height of 2500 m.

We are nearing Vesoul and the writer recognises the spot on which some years ago a landing was effected during a balloon trip.

The wireless operator Wegmann now receives various messages, which he passes on to us, they consist of information about the height at which the machine is travelling, as well as the different air currents which are to be encountered at various heights.

We are also given various details about the DOUGLAS D.C. — 2A machine, and learn that same is fitted with two 700 h.p. Wright-Cyclone engines which can reach a maximum speed of 338 km. p.h. The four tanks are placed in the wings and have a capacity of about 420 gallons. —

At 1.35 p.m. we are crossing over Chalons s/ Marne and pass shortly after two o'clock over Arras. In comfortably upholstered and adjustable seats we fully enjoy the landscape which extends for miles and miles.

The temperature can easily be regulated, as the air is admitted through a vent in the nose of the fuselage and transmitted by ducts to the passengers compartment.

Between Calais and Boulogne we cross the coast at a height of 2000 m., in barely seven minutes at 2h.33 p.m. we reach the English coast half-way between Dover and Folkestone, and arrive hardly 25 minutes later at 1h.57 (Greenwich meantime) at the Air port of Croydon.

Whilst the passengers enjoy a hearty meal, our two pilots are again called upon to occupy their pilot seats, and make various short flights over London with about 160 representatives of the English Press, as well as representatives of various Tourist Agencies. The Swiss Minister, Monsieur Paravicini, accompanied by Counsellors M. de Jemmer and de Bourg are present to show their interest in the opening of the newly innovated Air route. —

The duration of the flight Basle-London was exactly 2h. 28minutes, and if one considers the

saving of time and the comfortable manner in which this journey was accomplished, one can have but little qualms that this modus of travelling will have a great future.

W.D.

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12.55 dep. Airway Terminus Vict. Stat. arr. 13.35
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BASLE

16.30 arr. Birsfelden Airport dep. 9.35
16.55 arr. Swissair Centralbahnplatz dep. 9.10
16.45 dep. Birsfelden Airport arr. 9.20

ZURICH

17.10 arr. Dübendorf Airport dep. 8.55
17.40 arr. Hotel Schweizerhof
Bahnhofplatz dep. 8.15

Air Connection at Basle:
(operated by "Alpar," Berne)

17.40 dep. Basle-Airport arr. 9.15
18.15 arr. Berne-Airport dep. 8.35
18.30* dep. Berne-Airport arr. 7.50*
19.05* arr. Lausanne-Airport dep. 7.15*

* Berne-Lausanne and v.v. operated from 1.4.—7.9. only.

Train Connection by Swiss Federal Railways:

17.24 dep. Basle arr. 9.00
18.53 arr. Lucerne dep. 7.22
22.42 arr. Lugano dep. 02.36
00.20 arr. Milan dep. 00.20

Departure and Arrival Stations

The scheduled number of minutes spent in transit between the stations and the Airport is given in brackets:

London: Airway Terminus, Victoria Station (45)

Basle: Swissair, Centralbahnplatz
(opposite main station) (25)

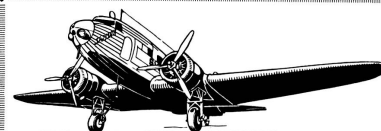
Zurich: Hotel Schweizerhof
(opposite main station) (40)

Berne: Hauptbahnhof (30)

Lausanne: Gare C.F.F. (25)

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