

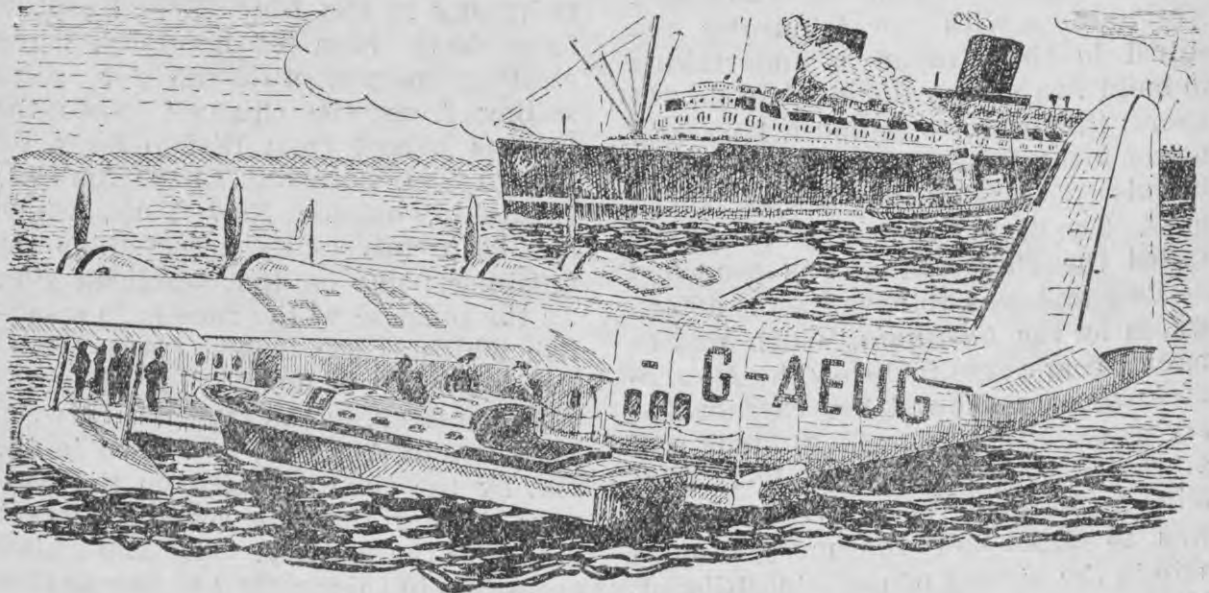
## Queens of the Blue Riband

The *Mauretania* was the fastest ship on the Atlantic for over 20 years—until Norddeutscher-Lloyd launched, in 1928, the *Europa* and the *Bremen*, two super-ships of 52,000 tons that gained the admiration of the world. On her maiden voyage the *Bremen* captured the Blue Riband from the gallant old *Mauretania* and reached a speed of 27.91 knots on the return trip. In the meantime the French had produced, in 1927, the *Ile de France*, a vessel of 43,000 tons, but, designed for a speed of 23 knots, she was not intended to take part in the race for records, and the main immediate reaction to the German effort was the building by the Italians of the *Rex* and the *Conte di Savoia*, fine ships of 51,000 and 48,500 tons respectively. The *Rex* wrested the westbound record from the *Bremen* in 1934 by crossing from Gibraltar to the Ambrose Lightship at an average speed of 28.92 knots, giving Italy the Blue Riband for the first time. The *Rex* was built at Sestri Ponente, in the Gulf of Genoa, and she proved herself capable of considerably more than her designed speed of 27½ knots.

Neither France nor Britain could long remain idle in view of the German-Italian spurt, and their respective

answers were the *Normandie*, which entered the service in 1935, and the *Queen Mary*, completed in the following year—the former with a gross tonnage of 83,423 and a length of 962ft. and the latter with a gross tonnage of 81,235 and a length of 975.2ft. The sensational turbo-electric-driven *Normandie* crossed to New York on her maiden voyage in 1935 at a mean speed of 29.53 knots to gain the Blue Riband by a generous margin, only to lose it in the following year to the *Queen Mary*. Supremacy swung from one to the other until in August, 1938, the British vessel achieved a record average speed of 31.69 knots on a trip from Ambrose Light to Bishop Rock. With the contest suspended owing to the war the Blue Riband has remained in the possession of the *Queen Mary*, although the *Queen Elizabeth*, which has maintained a speed under service conditions of about 28½ knots, is believed to be the faster ship. With a length overall of 1031ft. and a gross tonnage of 84,000, the *Queen Elizabeth* is bigger than either her sister-ship or the *Normandie*.

The construction of the *Queen Victoria* will enable Cunard-White Star to maintain a regular round-trip



Peace-time competitors: air and ocean liners