

improvement in safety of civil aircraft must have great attention after the war.

The chief safety devices developed during the war relate to the use of radio and of special direction-finding aids. Radio beams, to guide planes in to fog-bound or hidden aerodromes, have been highly developed. Radiolocation will also greatly improve the safety of post-war machines. Great progress has been made in combating that worst of all enemies, icing-up. Our bombers now fly through icing conditions which would have grounded them three years ago. The effects of intense cold in the carburettor have also largely been overcome.

Land Planes or Flying-boats

The final points to be discussed in relation to design is the burning question of whether land planes or flying-boats will be used on the long-distance routes. It is widely thought at present that the land plane will predominate. It can fly right into a country; and aerodrome facilities are far better than those of flying-boat bases for passengers. The

land plane gives, at present, a far better streamline shape in the fuselage, and is rather faster.

As planes become really large, however, the flying-boat may well come into its own again. The hull can be more capacious and comfortable than a land plane's, and experiments with retractable steps may give a better streamline shape. The prodigious length of run which a heavy land plane needs when taking off fully loaded, and the very strong and costly runways which the hundred-ton planes of the immediate future are going to need, raise serious difficulties in the provision of suitable aerodromes. A flying-boat has as long a take off as the calm water allows; and, the larger the boats become, the less they will be dependent even on calm water. Furthermore, no one has seriously tried to make a respectable flying-boat base for passengers, and it is calculated that convenient and up-to-date facilities could be made at a fraction of the cost of a large aerodrome.

So the argument continues.

LEAVING HOME

By Cpl. W. J. McELDOWNEY, R.N.Z.A.F.

This poem won first prize in the lyric poem section of the recent Services literary competitions.

Ours was not the short sharp break
Into the unencompassed sea
Of foreignness—we did not take
Abrupt departure suddenly;
But slowly toward the northern tip
Of the blue-brown hills upon our left,
We learned to make our world a ship
Before the final strand was cleft.

In the surf-defended firmament,
Beyond the white rock-water line,
Each of those two short days was spent
To the long familiar life-design:
Friends' company, the thronging thrust
Of growing grass, comfort of chairs,
Country roads with country dust,
Traffic on tar-sealed thoroughfares.

But as we see stars, for all our skills,
With no earthy details to distract
Our wonder, so those hills
Stood out detached—we only lacked
Credulity to stretch a hand
And touch the canvas, and, surprised,
To find it was a painted land,
A country summarized.

Old friends stand talking, loath to go;
Depart at last slowly; the parting fills
Their minds with mellowness—and so
At length we left the blue-brown hills.