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C.P. 49 (37).

**CABINET.****REPORT OF COMMITTEE SET UP TO CONSIDER DEVELOPMENT  
OF CIVIL AVIATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.***Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Air.*

I HAVE discussed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer the proposals of the Maybury Committee, whose Report was circulated as C.P. 25 (37); and we agree that the recommendations in the Report which involve Government action ought to be adopted.

2. The two most important recommendations relate to the licensing of air lines and the provision of radio facilities and a comprehensive air traffic control by the Government. While the proposals are separate, they are closely linked in argument and on merits. The Committee show convincingly that internal air transport in the United Kingdom is unlikely to become a paying proposition unless two conditions are fulfilled:—

- (i) A meteorological service, radio facilities and control to make possible flying in all weather.
- (ii) Regulation of air traffic so as to eliminate wasteful competition and ensure economic working costs and an adequate payload for machines in service.

3. The Committee accordingly recommend—

“ That all radio facilities and a comprehensive air traffic control organisation adequate to ensure the safety and regularity of air communications at all times in the United Kingdom should be provided, maintained and operated by the Government. This should be combined with the meteorological organisation immediately concerned with internal flying.

“ The capital cost of carrying out these recommendations is anticipated to be about £320,000, and the total annual cost about £240,000, of which about £40,000 per annum is already being incurred or in prospect. The whole cost of the Meteorological Service is already borne by the Government.

“ In putting forward these recommendations we recognise that the State would thus be making a substantial additional contribution to the development of aviation in this country. We have deliberately selected this rather than the method of subsidy as a means of assisting in the initial stages, since we trust that in the course of time it will prove possible for the burden to be transferred to aviation itself through the medium of registration fees or some similar device ” (paragraphs 142 and 143).

4. At the same time the Committee propose that all regular air services should be licensed, particular consideration being given to the licensing of certain air routes, the operation of which for a fixed term of years under special conditions would provide valuable information as to the possibilities of commercial aviation in this country under the most favourable circumstances.

5. The specially selected routes which the Committee recommend are the lines joining Belfast, Glasgow-Edinburgh, Newcastle, London, Southampton-Portsmouth and Bristol. The total route mileage of direct connections between these termini would be 2,900 miles, which would mean considerable cost of development in view of the traffic likely to be obtainable within a reasonable time. At a small sacrifice of speed, it is possible to give an equivalent service by joining the selected termini to a central junction aerodrome instead of directly to each other, thus reducing the route mileage from 2,900 to 960 miles. The central junction might well be situated in the Manchester-Liverpool area. This arrangement constitutes the Junction Aerodrome System on which the Committee's recommendations for special consideration are based (paragraphs 127, 128 and Maps A and B, Appendices 9 and 10).

6. They recommend that a licence for regular passenger services on the junction routes should be granted to a single company or to a combination of companies working on the closest terms of co-ordination. This licence should be limited in the first instance to a term of five years, renewable thereafter for suitable periods, if satisfactory performance has been given (paragraph 133).

7. They propose that the licensing authority should take into account the position of all operating companies in active existence who are now conducting, or have for a substantial period within the last three years conducted, regular and satisfactory services over any section or sections of the route concerned. They express the hope, however, that the companies eligible will combine in a single working unit to operate the scheme, thereby securing the maximum economies (paragraph 134).

8. On other internal routes they recommend that regular passenger services should be licensed in order to ensure the most-effective service to the public and avoid uneconomical overlapping; but that such licences should not necessarily be exclusive (paragraph 135).

9. There is power under the Air Navigation Act to set up a licensing authority and a licensing system by Order in Council which would require a positive resolution of both Houses of Parliament.

10. On merits, I think there is no doubt that the proposals of the Committee offer the best, and indeed the only, prospect of making internal air services self-supporting. The licensing proposals, which I thought might have evoked some criticism, have, in fact, met with considerable support in the press.

11. I therefore recommend that the Government should adopt both proposals. The meteorological service, radio equipment and facilities would be provided by the Air Ministry, and the Air Ministry would assume whatever degree of control over actual flying is necessary, covering both civil and Service flying.

12. The Post Office, who were represented on the Committee, have agreed to co-operate where mail contracts can usefully and properly be placed (paragraphs 150-155).

13. There will, no doubt, be some local lobbying to get the lines of the junction route altered, but I think we must stand firm on the Report. The Air Ministry must, I think, accept the invidious task of deciding what aerodromes are to be selected to serve Manchester-Liverpool and Glasgow-Edinburgh. Unfortunately, careful investigation on the spot has shown that the only aerodrome site which is at all adequate for the latter is a site close to Glasgow.

14. The Committee recommend that financial assistance for a limited period should be given to a suitable flying school, so that it can offer advanced training for air line pilots at low rates, preference being given to short service pilots who have retired from the R.A.F., and that consideration should be given to the question of continuing similar arrangements on a permanent basis for short-service pilots of the R.A.F. I am advised that the cost of this should not exceed £10,000 a year (I hope it will be rather less). It is a very desirable recommendation, as there is a real shortage of highly-trained pilots for this kind of civil flying. The proposal will be a real help both to the operating companies and to pilots, and the Chancellor and I agree that we ought to accept it. (Recommendation (o).)

15. I ought perhaps to mention the blessing which the Committee give to flying clubs, and the recommendation that due weight should be given to their value in reviewing future subsidy arrangements. (Recommendation (a).) We do already subsidise these clubs on a modest scale, and I hope to hold the fort on the basis at present agreed with the Treasury.

16. The other recommendations mostly concern local authorities and aerodrome proprietors, but in certain cases, such as the proposal for the establishment of a standard scale of aerodrome charges (paragraphs 101-147), may involve action by the Air Ministry. In the case of this particular recommendation I should propose to keep a free hand for the time being.

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*Air Ministry, February 5, 1937.*

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