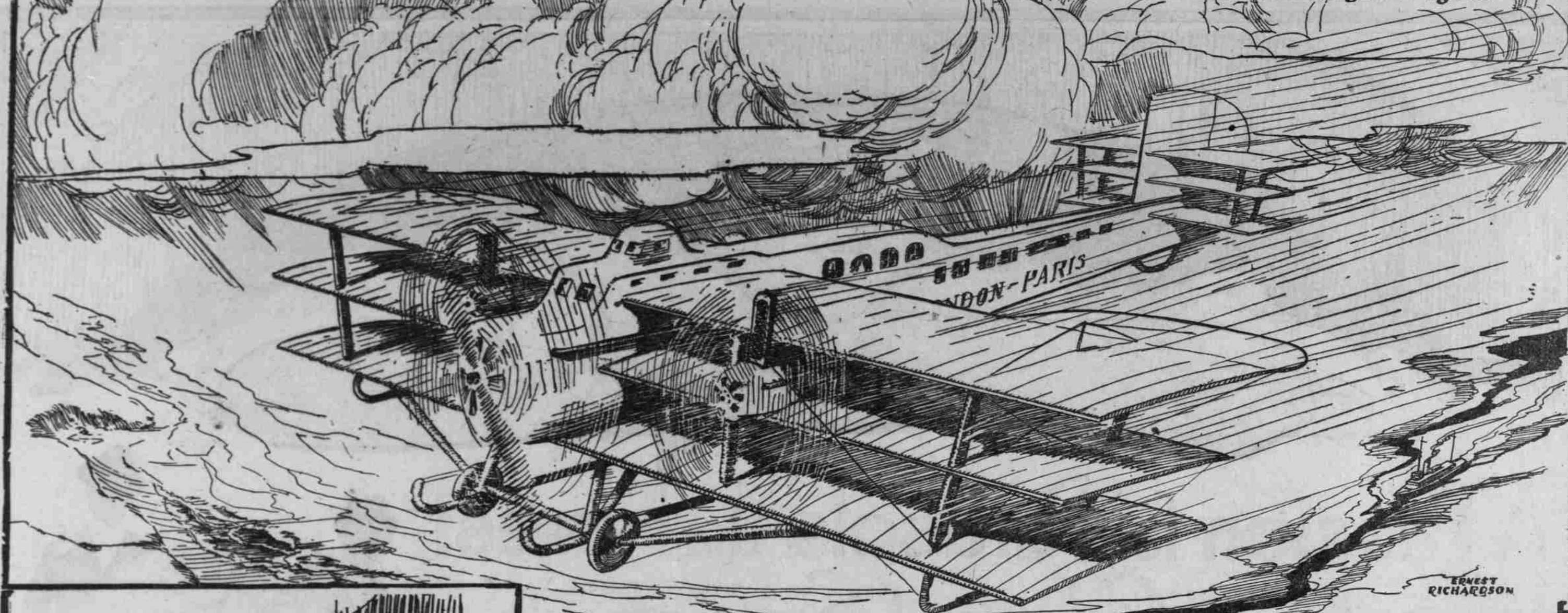


The Railroad Of The Air

Sky Travel Now Follows
Regular Routes on Fixed
Schedules and Soon Will
Include Night Flights



Aeroplanes Are Dispatched Just Like Trains
The Schedule Board and Air Manager

BY ROBERT LAMAR.

A SPECK in the sky, hurtling through space at the fastest speed man has ever traveled, growing larger as some focused object through a camera lens until the speck takes the form of a giant red airplane, its wingspread as great as half a city block. A roar of its engines, as great as the clap of the hoof-beats of the 400 horses it displaces, then a sudden cutoff of this energy, a graceful volplane and a sweep to earth, the machine to be brought to rest within an inch of a designated spot and within a second of an hour long established.

From doors in the fuselage step forth a dozen travelers, dressed as though they were leaving a closed automobile, but with a flush which only travel through the air at a speed greater than the fastest express train can give. Twelve hours before they had been in Budapest, that charming capital of old Bohemia with which one can scarcely associate the thought of the most modern of 20th century locomotion. Now they are debarking at Le Bourget, the air port of that gay Paris, the greatest Grand Central terminal of the aerial highways, at which daily 30 express planes call and start for a dozen capitals of the continent.

From Constantinople.

Or perhaps some of the voyagers may have taken the plane when it left Constantinople with its spired mosques behind only the evening before. They have traveled with a break in the journey overnight, a distance of 1300 miles in a brief 24 hours. Less adventurous voyagers, whose timidity and fear of the breakneck speed of these racing air expresses led them to choose a voyage by boat or train, will not arrive in Paris or London until four or five days later, fatigued and having undergone a travel equally as dangerous—statistics of fatalities prove this—as the mad dash through the air.

But the call of this giant plane from Constantinople, Budapest, Vienna, Prague and Warsaw is only one event in a busy day at Le Bourget. Early in the morning the first aerial express, loaded down with newspapers, mail and perhaps an early rising passenger or two, leaves for London, and from then until darkness falls there is constant movement in the great air port.

Test flights are now being made at night, and soon the schedule of flights will not be interrupted by the going down of the sun. Giant aerial beacons and the many lighthouses which dot the channel coasts will light up the aerial highway so that pilots can drive their planes between London and Paris, always in sight of one of the string of lights which will mark out the course between the two capitals.

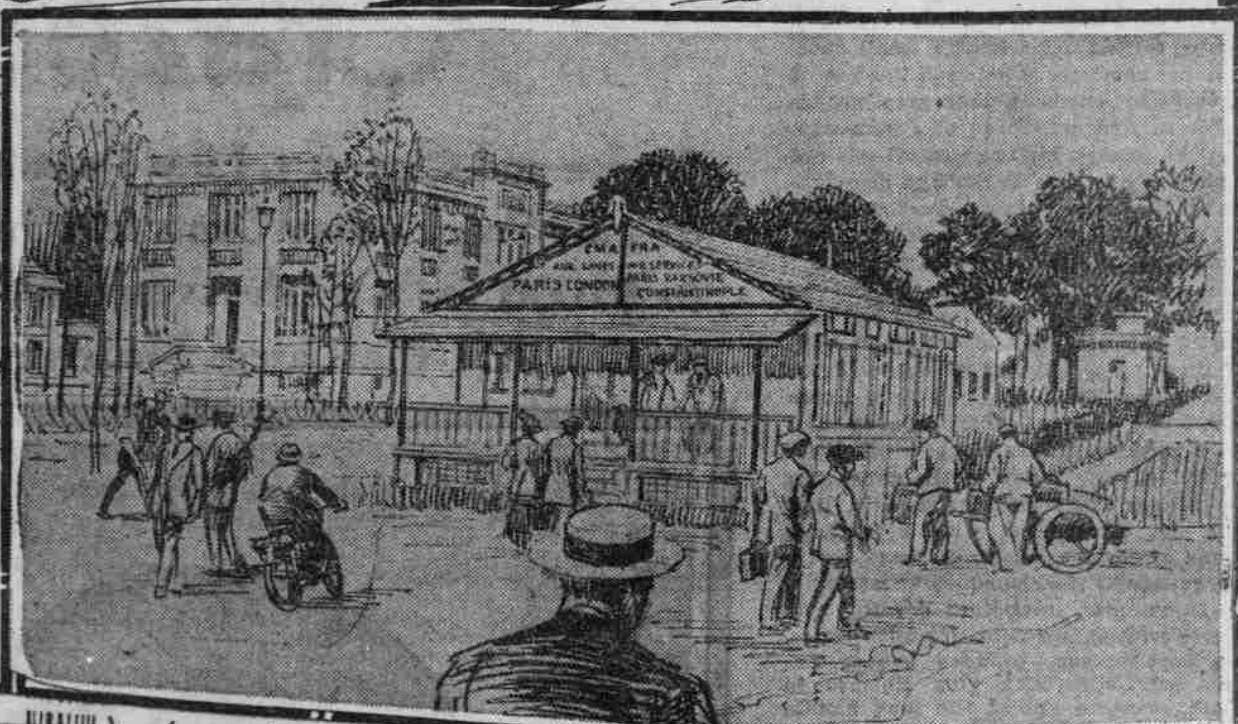
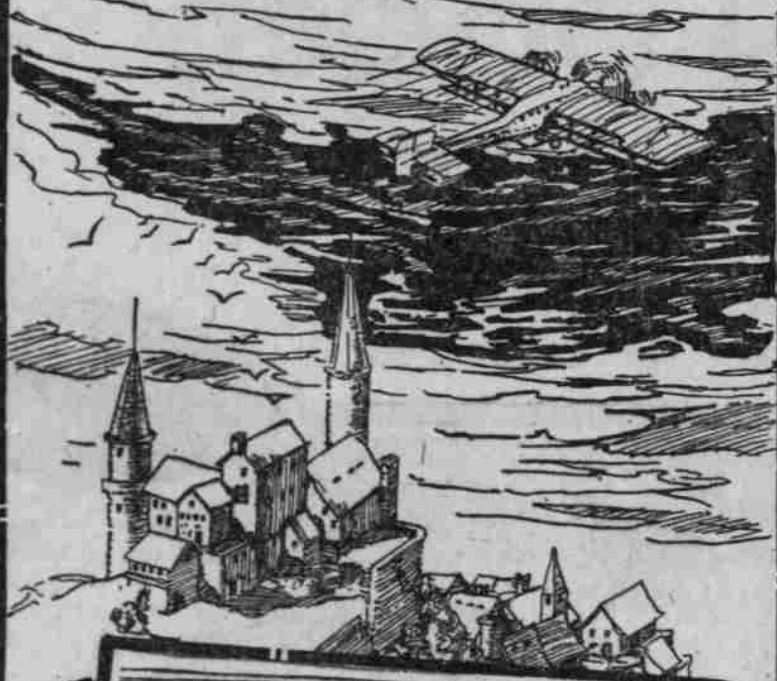
Business men demand night flying. The dangers of such travel, especially in view of the channel fog, would be great were it not for the enterprise of the French air ministry, a most essential part of the government service, which has been responsible for building up at Le Bourget the center of the greatest system of organized airways in the world. The government means to eliminate this danger by making night flying—from the pilot's point of view—even more safe than day travel. Not only lighthouses mark his path, but lights will direct him to any of a half dozen emergency landing fields so that he will not have to trust to luck in the event of a forced descent.

Long before the departure of the first plane for London Le Bourget is the scene of activity. The planes, like the great locomotives which haul our Wolverines, 20th Century and Sunset Limiteds, must be coaxed and caressed for hours before they take up the task of hauling their human freight safely at the greatest maximum speed. Often after a night in the open hangars the engines cough a bit.

Tuning Up the Express.

To send a plane directly into the air would be to encourage fatalities. Army fliers learned the wisdom of keeping engines running in anticipation of trouble during busy nights at the front. Often an hour is required priming these aerial expresses before they are "taxied" up to the stone square which is the "railroad platform" at Le Bourget.

The pilot, the "Casey Jones" of the air, generally joins the plane at the same time as the passengers. At Le Bourget, which is situated for convenience sake about five miles from the city, the passengers are met at their hotels by limousines and brought to the air port before



The First Stage Of A
Trans-European Air Journey



Just In From London—And Not
A Bit Sea-Sick

the hour set for departure so as to provide ample time for the few formalities of passport inspection and the visit to the customs office for an examination of baggage.

The planes themselves are the latest word in modern construction. The common belief that war stocks are drawn upon is a fallacy. Few of the planes in use today are more than a year old. The progress in aerial development is so great that the life of a commercial plane is brief and it never enjoys the ripe old age that fell to the war planes at the front.

The passengers are more comfortable than are the voyagers in many of the express trains on the continent. The seats are large and deep. Passengers can walk up and down the aisle of the car without being compelled to stoop to avoid an unpleasant contact with the struts overhead. The machines are fitted with modern accommodations, and most of them, especially those making the longer flights, have a small kitchenette set apart, where meals are prepared en route. A bar is a popular feature, and some boast such conveniences as libraries and card tables.

They are well heated in winter and cooled by fans when required in summer. Electric lights are "fed" from a

power plant attached to the motor. At each seat is a window, and generally in the forward end of the car a section of the floor is cut away and a heavy glass inserted, so that the voyagers can look directly down on the landscape. The side windows slide back for ventilation.

In a plane flying between London and Paris recently two passengers, an American and an Englishman, were seated opposite each other. The plane appeared to be stuffy, and experienced air travelers declare that aerial seasickness can be traced directly to the accumulation of fumes in an unventilated plane. The American had traveled before and did not hesitate to slide back the little window at his side to let in a rush of fresh cool air.

The Englishman protested. The American insisted. The Englishman persisted. The American remained obdurate and during two hours the pair quarreled, but when the plane landed at Le Bourget the little window was open. The American had avoided air sickness and the Englishman had been so heated by anger and the extent of the discussion that the effects of the open window were lost on him.

At hourly intervals in the morning and afternoon, and half hourly around noon,

planes leave Paris for London. This service is maintained with such punctuality that along the route between the capitals watches are set with the passing of the plane.

Any hour of the day at Le Bourget has for those who lounge around the aerodromes the same interest that prompts one to while away hours in a busy railroad station. Picture the plane which quits Le Bourget at 6 o'clock each morning. Three hours later the passengers have passed over the chimney tops of quaint Alsatian villages, have leaped the Rhine and are flying high over the beautiful wooded country which is to be found on the right bank of the Rhine in Germany.

Lunch is served from the little kitchen no bigger than a band box, and one of the wonders of the world is how the chef, who combines the duties with that of bar-keep, porter and bell boy, waiter and cashier, can produce from the tiny corner allotted to him lobsters and mayonnaise and salad, a cold roast chicken, some warm vegetables, a delicious fromage, creamy custard and an assortment of fruit. Dinners or luncheons on these aerial travels are not skimpy affairs.

Luncheon served and the dishes cleared away, it is well on to 1 o'clock and

Prague is already in sight. A brief halt at this Szecho-Slovak capital affords no time to look around, but here one must change "trains." Those who wish to go northeast into Poland for the terminal at Warsaw remain in the plane, which brought the party from Paris. Those who are to travel on toward the south, to visit several more capitals before arriving at their destination, be it Vienna, Budapest or Constantinople, find awaiting them another plane, a replica of the first for comfort, speed and endurance.

The passengers who continue on to Warsaw are able to boast that they have taken breakfast in Paris, luncheon over Germany and dinner in Warsaw. The other travelers, who head south after a wait of a half hour, during which their baggage is transferred and they make themselves snug for the remainder of the journey, pass over Vienna at 3:30 P. M. and only nine hours passed. Budapest is reached at 6 o'clock, and there the whole party halts. Those whose mission takes them on to the Bosphorus resume their aerial travel the following morning after a night in the colorful Bohemian capital.

London-Paris Travel.

The peak of travel comes late in the day, when business men who have completed a day's business in either London or Paris are returning to the other capital. Promptly at 6:15 o'clock two planes appear in the north, one being the express from London, which has made the fastest crossing of the day in two hours and 10 minutes. The other is the always crowded air "liner" from Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Brussels.

They sweep above the field in growing circles and finally land within a few feet of each other in front of the structure which serves as a temporary station. Their passengers hustle through the formalities of the customs and immigration officers and within a few minutes are seated in automobiles being hustled on their way to Paris, five miles away.

With a roar a plane which had been taxied to place in the meanwhile takes off for London. At this hour of the day the London service is rushed. Every seat is booked in advance and, in addition, the plane carries a heavy load of letters and registered mail, the accumulation of the downtown offices during the afternoon.

Fifteen minutes later the great express comes roaring overhead from the far-off Constantinople, to be followed in a few minutes by the second "section," bringing the voyagers from Warsaw, who have followed the Constantinople express from Prague. No sooner have the passengers of these expresses gotten out of the way than down sweeps the London express, and an instant later another London plane takes off. During the hour between 6 and 7 o'clock in the evening three planes leave for London, two ar-

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