

OPENING SPEECH of the President of the "ORGANISATION SCIENTIFIQUE ET TECHNIQUE INTERNATIONALE DU VOL À VOILE",

L. A. de LANGE,

made at July 5th 1952 in the building of the

REAL AERO CLUB DE ESPAÑA

on the airfield **CARABANCHEL ALTO** at **MADRID.**

Your Excellency, Mr President of the Real Aero Club de España, Ladies and Gentlemen,

All through the ages man has felt the urge to freedom. The young child does not feel happy in its play-pen, and it looks very proud when for the first time in its life it has scrambled over the top and gained its first little bit of liberty.

Pioneers departed from the countries where their forefathers had earned a livelihood; their yearning for freedom and independence was so great that they forsook their easy way of life and accepted privations and hard work in order to sever the ties which bound them to the known.

According as the two-dimensional, the surface of the earth was explored, the desire to conquer the air increased. It was above that the boundless open road to freedom lay.

When Daedalus and Icarus were incarcerated in their own labyrinth, they made themselves a pair of wings in order to escape from their prison by flying.

The thought lurking behind this myth is, in the nature of things, not the visible escape from their captivity, but the spiritual liberation effected by material aids.

It is not by mere chance that the edifices erected for the worship of God were crowned with steeples pointing to the sky. To break away from mother earth, to glide freely through the thin air, should be the highest ideal of freedom.

The urge to fly is therefore in its most profound sense a longing for freedom.

The man who penetrates the atmosphere takes leave of earthly things.

Both in the material and in the ideal sense big things then become small, and only then does he really feel, physically and spiritually, that he is at liberty.

It was thus that gliding came into being as a game with freedom as its goal.

When gliding, a man is more closely united with wind and clouds; he is more dependent upon himself than in any other form of aviation; this game with freedom satisfies the highest human aspirations.

But alas! Playing a game for its own sake only is almost impossible in this materialistic world.

Side by side with an ideal we still seek after a materialistic objective.

It would be wrong merely to regret this, for most certainly in order to raise an expensive game like gliding to the highest stage of development, the financial support of many is indispensable; but then the practical benefit to be derived from this game must be made clear to mankind in general.

It is the great merit of our Honorary President, Professor Dr Walter Georgii, that thanks to his researches and farseeing vision, he pointed out to us as far back as 1926 the potentialities inherent in the sailplane for the advancement of science and technique.

Seeing the programme for the Fourth Congress of the OSTIV, which in a few moments will be opened, we shall have to admit that Professor Georgii was absolutely right.

Never has the problem of high altitude flow phenomena, based on practical experiments with sailplanes, been more exhaustively dealt with than it will be at this congress.

Is not this problem of exceptional importance for the development of civil and military aviation, which in the future will constantly be directed to the higher strata of the air?

When we see the modern jet aircraft, do we not then see the great resemblance to the high performance sailplanes, which were already in use before the war?

Does not the modern delta wing owe its origin to the important experiments with sailplanes undertaken with this type of wing by the Horten Brothers, and those carried out by the glider expert Dr Lippisch?

Well now, gliding, besides its ideal objective, which it has always kept in view, has indeed obtained a utilitarian objective, which may be defined as:

"research for the benefit of civil and military aviation, as well as for the science in general, an aid for the selection and training of airmen, and a means for propagating air-mindedness."

Your Excellency, Mr President of the Real Aero Club de España, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is the task of the OSTIV to achieve results for science, technique and education by making use of the glider.

That in the performance of this task fatal accidents will have to be mourned, is alas, inevitable.

On 18th December 1951, a member of the Scientific Section of our Organisation, our Swedish friend Karl Eric ÖVEGARD, lost his life whilst making a test flight in the higher strata of the air near Bishop in the United States.

Let us observe a moment of silence to commemorate that enthusiastic co-labourer of our Organisation.

Thank you.

Your Excellency, I find it difficult to express in words how grateful the OSTIV is to your Government and the Spanish Aero Club for the assistance so far rendered, and on which we shall be able to count during the congress. In the course of recent months I myself have twice enjoyed the privilege of being your guest in this glorious city of Madrid.

I have seen for myself what an important position aviation occupies here, and I have learned how very friendly and helpful your countrymen are to foreign guests.

In this city we find the right atmosphere for a congress like this.

Your ancient buildings, such as El Escorial, and the modern ones such as the monument in the Valley of the Fallen, testify to great energy and a creative spirit.

In the President of the Aero Club de España, the Duque de Almodóvar, you have a brilliant figure who, in addition to his love of flying, possesses genuine love of his country, and who allows no opportunity to go by to show foreigners the beauties and art treasures of his country.

A better host than the Spanish Aero Club we could not have wished for.

It is therefore not as a mere formality that I have the honour to request your Excellency to be good enough to open our congress.