

OPENING SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE *ORGANISATION SCIENTIFIQUE ET
TECHNIQUE DU VOL à VOILE*,

L.A. de LANGE

ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE Vth CONGRESS OF THE

*O. S. T. I. V. * AT BUXTON (ENGLAND) ON JULY 22th, 1954.

There is not the slightest doubt that aviation exerts an extraordinarily great influence on our society, whether judged from an economic, political or military point of view.

Without exaggeration, we may say that the course of world affairs during the last fifteen years has to a great extent been directly and indirectly determined by the tremendous progress made in the development of the aeroplane.

There are those who, seeing in the aeroplane a powerful instrument of war, would like to see an embargo placed on its further development, just as they would like to call a halt to any further advance in the knowledge of nuclear fission. But it is not the progress of technique and science that lays snares for us but the imperfect and erring mind of man, which, by misapplying the newly gained knowledge, may lead us to ruin and destruction.

Let us fully realise that aviation offers an outstanding medium for mankind by which to create and preserve friendship and understanding among the nations and peoples of the world.

What, now, viewed against this background, is the significance of gliding to aviation?

Aviation can only then continue to discharge its great task if it is assured of an adequate and steady supply of young men who, besides satisfying the requirements laid down in respect of physical fitness, general education and natural aptitude, also possess the inherent qualities of personality which fit them to become pilots.

Aviation of to-day and to-morrow needs young people who, with a desire for freedom, believe in it as a means of reducing frontiers to vanishing lines and also of bringing together the nations in one peaceful world.

To grade, shape and prepare these young men for their life's tasks should, I am convinced, be the main objective to which gliding is directed. In the fraternity of glider-pilots, the budding airman finds the environment in which his craving for freedom finds expression, and where his flair for pitting his skill against wind and weather is appreciated.

There, too, the young meteorologist will be welcomed with enthusiasm and sympathy, and will find a congenial sphere and co-operation in which further to pursue his studies.

The young engineer, too, will find in the world of gliderpilots a source of inspiration which is bound to prove of benefit to the whole field of aviation.

It is entirely in line with the ideal conception of the task of aviation that the *O. S. T. I. V. * - International Scientific and Technical Organisation for Soaring Flight - organises once every two years in conjunction with the international gliding championships, a Congress at which frank exchanges take place of scientific, technical, and practical

experiences gained within the framework of gliding.

May this Vth Congress of our organisation which we are holding in this lovely valley of the Peak District likewise be effective in fulfilling in every respect the purpose of the *O.S.T.I.V.*, that is, to help co-ordinate the efforts of all nations in the realm of soaring flight and to make discoveries and inventions, which may originate in various countries, available for the benefit of the advancement everywhere among the co-operating nations.

In the hope and confidence that, furthermore, during this Congress ways and means will be found of giving more publicity also to the importance of gliding for aviation in general, I now have great pleasure in declaring this Vth Congress opened.