

SUBORBITR

EDITORIAL NOTES

Four Years Old

This year the Aero Medical Society completed four years of its existence and though the start was a very modest one and development of necessity slow, there is ample evidence that firm foundations for the Society and for Aero-Medicine have been laid in India and that the child will grow up to be healthy and robust. The Society has succeeded to a large extent as a result of the Annual Meetings, the Scientific Sessions and the publication of this Journal in disseminating knowledge of and creating an interest in Aviation Medicine throughout the Armed Forces and also bringing the subject to the notice of various Scientific and other bodies in India.

Aviation Medicine owes its existence to the establishment of Aviation itself and cannot have an independent existence. This fact together with the preventative nature of the Science makes it difficult for the importance of the subject to be quickly appreciated. However, there are signs of growing realisation of its scope and functions. Nevertheless much remains to be done in that the primary aim of Aviation Medicine being the prevention of accidents, little proof if any, can be given of the value of the subject in terms of increased safety or of saving of valuable lives and aircraft.

It is rarely that a flying accident is due to one single cause. Usually a variety of factors contribute to it. Of these the human element still remains of primary importance. Improvements in the design of cockpits, instrument lay outs, the provision of safety equipment and specialised flying clothing and in the care of aircrew play a vital part in increasing operational efficiency and safety. Such progress takes time to manifest itself.

Recognition of Aviation Medicine

It is for this reason that we are very gratified to record that Aviation Medicine has now been recognised as a full fledged Speciality in the Armed Forces Medical Services. This recognition has been due largely to the efforts of Group Captain S.P. Bhatia, Director of Medical Services (Air) and to the help, advice and support given by Lieutenant General B. Chaudhuri, Director General, Armed Forces Medical Services. It is indeed gratifying to know that the Armed Forces generally have fully appreciated the importance of the subject and have now accepted Aviation Medicine as a speciality on a par with other conventional specialities. This augurs very well for the future and is really the beginning of further developments in Aero-Medicine in the Indian Air Force on an augmented scale. Now that Aviation Medicine has been recognised, the horizons of work for the physician have been greatly enlarged not only in the IAF but also in Civil Aviation. Another "barrier" has been broken.

School of Aviation Medicine

1957 has seen another signal advance towards our further development. This year through the efforts of the Director of Medical Services (Air), the Director General, Armed Forces Medical Services and the Scientific Adviser to the Minister of Defence, a School of Aviation Medicine has been established at Bangalore. The functions of the School

will consist largely of training medical and G.D. officers in various medical aspects of Aviation and provision also exists for development of research activities.

Here too, a modest start has been made with a small group of officers. The School is housed in buildings and on land very kindly provided by the Hindustan Aircraft (Private) Ltd. We are very grateful to the Factory authorities not only for allowing us full facilities in this respect but also for appreciating the necessity of locating the School in close proximity to the heart of the Aircraft Industry. We know that the close association of engineers, test pilots and doctors, which such a location will foster, will result in mutual benefit to the Industry as a whole.

Space Medicine

The International Geophysical Year, now being commemorated, has provided the impetus for considerable co-operation between Nations in the solution of various scientific problems relating to the planet on which we live.

It has also been the occasion for the launching of the earth satellites. An era of rocketry is upon us. We hope that eventually the human race will utilise its technological aptitude and skill and the experience and knowledge gained from such advances in Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles and rocketry in general, for scientific purposes. We would like to see the initiation of the Space Era develop into a conquest of Space for the furtherance of human knowledge of the mysteries of this Universe and also to fulfil the spirit of adventure ever present in the human mind.

Aviation has taught us that the human mind is far more adaptable than its frail body. It is surely not asking too much for such a mind to adjust its activities for the benefit of mankind at large.
