

THE JUNIOR AERO CLUB DINES "BERT"

BERT HINKLER, like all people who perform outstanding feats in the aviation world, has had to pay for his greatness by a surfeit of dinners in his honour. During the past two or three weeks he has been dined and wined by nearly every aeronautical body of any standing, as well as by many civic authorities. The latest to pay tribute to his greatness is the Junior Aero Club, and this was staged in a vociferous and no uncertain manner, in the Club premises, Ham Yard, Great Windmill Street, London, on December 22.

Sir Arthur Whitten Brown was in the chair, and in proposing the health of "Bert," he read a letter from Col. the Master of Sempill, who regretted his inability, owing to a previous engagement, to be present to preside. Then, in a short but extraordinarily sincere and appropriate speech as from one pilot to another, Sir Arthur asked the assembly to drink the health of their guest.

Whatever reception Bert has had at other gatherings, this one certainly moved him very much more, and it was some considerable time until the spontaneous and unusual show of appreciation could be quelled. This was only done by the toast master, Mr. G. P. Olley, asking for the health of Mrs. "Bert" to be drunk. Again the cheers broke out, and once more it was a long time before Bert Hinkler was allowed to reply; when he did, he said that the difficulty of facing such an overwhelming reception would, he hoped, be realised, and he trusted that any lack of words of his with which to express his appreciation would be overlooked. He said that all this came about by his just going out on a little tour to see the world and because he kept the nose of the machine straight, he arrived back in England again. At times, he said, it was very lonely; in fact, over the water when the evening approached it was certainly his idea of "hell." Later, however, he said, he grew more cheerful, and the wonderful weather effects made everything ex-

tremely pleasant; so much so that he felt it must be like heaven—that is, if the ladies would allow that there could be heaven without their being present. Such a reception, he said, repaid any effort he had made by his flight, which, after all, was only done to demonstrate the super-excellence of British aircraft and engines to the world. He deprecated his own personal part of the flight, for he said many pilots, by real slogging hard work on air lines, were daily doing far more than he had done, as his trip was largely in the nature of a joy ride.

When called upon to say a few words, Mrs. Hinkler said that it was the most thrilling party of her life, and she asked the Junior Aero Club to accept her very grateful thanks for the evening.

Mr. Eric Teesdale, the presiding genius and secretary of the club, said that it was always his pleasure on such an occasion to propose the health of the chairman, but, he said, it was their invariable custom that the speeches should be short though potent, for they always came from men who did things and who did not talk. He noted with satisfaction that as usual they had been able to secure the presence of many important pilots, and one and all, he felt sure, would regret that both Col. Shelmerdine and the Master of Sempill were unable to be present as well. In conclusion, he asked for the health of Sir Arthur and Lady Whitten Brown to be drunk in the usual J.A.C. fashion.

Those present included prominent men from all branches of aviation, both trade and service, and every one will agree that they had a most enjoyable evening. Even the menus were in keeping with the rest of the entertainment, couched as they were in entertaining terms by, we believe, Mr. Geoffrey Dorman. The reference to "roast monkey with brown stuffing" caused some apprehension when Bert Hinkler saw it, and we understand that he immediately sent round to his hotel to ascertain that his own pet marmoset was still alive.

CIRCUIT OF EUROPE

THE Aero Club of Germany announces that the entries closed on December 15 for the Circuit of Europe, which is to be flown during this year, and that through their aero clubs the following countries have entered machines: France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Switzerland and Czecho-Slovakia. It is regretted that Great Britain will not be represented, the reason given by the German Aero Club being that British private machines are too heavy to be included within the weight limitations imposed by the regulations. Regret is expressed that the Aero Club of Germany did not find it possible to modify the regulations to an extent which would have admitted British light planes.

The Circuit of Europe will be one of approximately 7,500 km. (4,660 miles), of which the last 155 miles will constitute a speed course over which the competing machines will fly at full speed.

The contest will probably be held during August, 1932, and the start will be at the Tempelhof aerodrome, Berlin. The machines will then fly via Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia to Italy (Rome). At Rome ends the first of the three great stages into which the con-

test is divided. Each stage will be of as near one-third of the total as is practicable, i.e., 2,500 km. (1,550 miles). Competitors will be given two days only for covering each of the main stages, so that the whole of the Circuit of Europe will have to be flown in six days.

From Rome the course will be laid over Southern France, Switzerland, Germany, to Paris, where the second main stage ends. It is likely that at Paris there will be a day's rest for competitors.

The third and last stage is from Paris via Holland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, to Berlin, where a triangular course, taking in Tempelhof and Staaken, will be chosen for the final speed contest of 155 miles. The third turning point in this triangle has not yet been announced. Prizes totalling 300,000 francs have been announced, of which the first prize will be one of 100,000 francs.

As a result of Great Britain's non-participation, the competing machines will not visit England, and thus Londoners will be deprived of an opportunity of seeing the foreign machines taking part. The Royal Aero Club will, however, be relieved of the necessity of organising a British control.

An Independent Test Pilot

Firms who have cut down their staffs and who do not feel justified in employing a full-time staff pilot will no doubt be interested to hear that Mr. R. H. Stocken is now practising as a test pilot and aeronautical consultant. He has opened an office at 56, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4 (Telephone: Central 3226). There are many aircraft, aero engine and accessory firms who find their own pilot away or engaged on some other work when an urgent test is required, in which case the services of a pilot with such experience as Mr. Stocken has should be invaluable. Mr. Stocken speaks French fluently, and his services could no doubt be profitably made use of for demonstrating to representatives from foreign countries. Mr. Stocken's

flying experience extends back to the beginning of 1916, and from that date he has been employed by the Royal Air Force and by several aircraft firms in capacities ranging from instructor at the Central Flying School, Upavon, where he was passed as category A.1, to personal assistant to the General manager of the de Havilland aircraft firm. During his civil time he has worked for the Aircraft Disposal Co., Ltd., Gloster Aircraft Co., de Havilland Aircraft Co. and the Air Transport and Travel Co.

U.S. Navy Manœuvres
ELABORATE fleet manœuvres are to take place between the Hawaiian islands and the Californian coast in February and March. The naval airship "Akron" will take part in the coast defence of California.