

WORK FOR AIRMEN POLICING THE CITY

THAT the airplane has come to stay as a practical means of transportation and policing has been demonstrated, first, by the mail service work now carried on in this country and, second, by the recent announcement that New York had created an aviation section in its Police Department. The plan arose in the mind of ~~Mr. Wanamaker~~ Mr. Wanamaker, who, in addition to the other offices he holds, is Special Deputy Police Commissioner of this city. He has been a veteran supporter of aeronautics since 1909, when he purchased and brought back to the United States a Blériot monoplane of the type in which Louis Blériot, the famous French aviator, flew across the English Channel. In 1914, it will be remembered, Mr. Wanamaker ordered the first transatlantic airplane and organized the transatlantic flight which was prevented by the war. Later he presented to the Aero Club of America a large balloon which was later used to train the first United States Army balloon pilots to go across. Having been so actively engaged in this line of work, he became interested in having the City of New York the first to demonstrate the value of aerial policing.

Henry Woodhouse, who is a member of the Board of Governors of the Aero Club of America and the editor of *Flying*, and who was consulted on the project, said of it:

"A police department is very much in the position of a legislative body. If it is led by progressive men, it looks ahead into the future and adopts progressive measures to meet the conditions. If it is not progressive it waits until the need for measures is emphasized by harmful effects and then it tries to patch up the harm done. Considering the step taken by the New York Police Department there is no gainsaying the fact that it belongs in the first category. Mr. Hawley, President of the Aero Club, put the

situation in a nutshell when he declared that the work of policing the rivers, harbors, and bays of a city was of tremendous importance and that the problems would be solved by the employment of aircraft."

The work of the aviators in connection with the directing of the protection of the communities surrounding Morgan, N. J., during the recent catastrophe when the flames-threatened to set on fire tons of T N T, which might have caused the destruction of the subways and buildings even in New York City, emphasized the necessity of having aviators available for such emergencies.

"Had Halifax had an aerial policeman, just one, if you please, the major part of the catastrophe of Dec. 6, 1917, which cost not less than \$50,000,000, might have been averted. Two aerial bombs dropped squarely on the ship by the aerial policeman would have sunk the ill-fated Mont Blanc, and the disaster would have ended there. Failing to sink her, the policeman could have advised the authorities and directed the work of obstructing the way of the munition loaded ship and prevented her from drifting to the Richmond pier, thereby isolating her and minimizing the work of destruction.

"The possibility of oil ships catching fire is always present at any port; likewise the possibilities of fires in shipping centres. I believe it will be but a matter of time when aerial policing will be required by all the bigger cities and when fire insurance rates will be based on the point as to whether or not a territory is under aerial police protection.

"Besides protection against fires, every city near a harbor or near rivers needs seaplane patrols to police waterways. It will greatly simplify the work of rounding up and eliminating river pirates, of directing water traffic, directing the clearing of waterways of driftwood, breaking up of ice-floes, and other important work. Equipped with

a Colver wireless telephone such as is used by the United States Navy to direct aerial operations, a police aviator can receive orders direct from the office of the Chief of the Aviation Section of the Police Department and report directly to him as to conditions at any port within a radius of from ten to twenty miles, which he can survey from a height of one thousand to two thousand feet. Having received radio-telephone orders from the Aviation Chief, the aerial policeman can, in turn, transmit the orders to Captains of ships and can carry out the orders at lightning speed.

"A seaplane equipped with a machine gun, traveling at a speed of seventy to eighty miles an hour, will be more effective in eliminating river pirates than anything else devised so far.

"Catastrophes like the Minnesota fire, which destroyed entire communities and caused losses amounting to millions of dollars, or the Dayton and San Diego floods, could be isolated quickly and so save lives and property."

Police Commissioner Enright has appointed Colonel Jefferson De Mont

Thompson head of this branch of the Police Department. His interest in aeronautics has been of many years' standing. He is one of the founders of the Aero Club of America. Before the war he spent his time in Europe studying the various makes and models of flying machines. Together with this, he has gained a national reputation as a traffic expert. He was a member of the Traffic Committee under Mayor Mitchell and was appointed Vice Chairman of the committee by Mayor Hylan.

It is planned to have the landing fields for the aerial policemen as near as possible to the city. Murray Hulbert, Director of the Port and Commissioner of Docks, has suggested Governors Island as the best place. There are also to be several emergency landing places within a radius of ten miles, where a machine could land in case of bad weather. Already there have been large numbers of offers made of places within a radius of five miles of the city for seaplanes as well as landplanes.

It is expected to have all arrangements for the air patrol completed within two months.