

Report of Proceedings at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Institution held at the Engineers' Club, Coventry Street, W.1. on 10th June, 1925.

Mr H B. Molesworth in the Chair.

THIRTY MEMBERS ATTENDED

1. Called upon by the CHAIRMAN, the SECRETARY read the Notice convening an Extraordinary Meeting

2 The CHAIRMAN moved

THAT the Objects and Rules of the Institution be extended by the following clause

To amalgamate with any other Society or Institution having objects wholly or partly similar to the Institution

Proposed by MR HILL and seconded by MR OSWALD, this motion was adopted by 16 votes to 4 against

3 The CHAIRMAN read the following speech concerning the drafted agreement between the Institution and the Royal Aeronautical Society

Gentlemen,--You have all received a notice of this Extraordinary Meeting

of the Members of the Institution, together with copy of an agreement which has been entered into by the Council of this Institution and that of the Royal Aeronautical Society, containing the terms of a proposed amalgamation

With much regret that the Institution should have to lose its separate identity, your Council have come to the conclusion that the financial position of the Institution renders this course necessary. The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, who have hitherto generously supported the Institution by three grants, totalling £400, find themselves unable to continue this support, while the subscription income of £250 is insufficient to meet the Institution's printing and other expenses. It is felt that the work hitherto done by the Institution could be executed in the future under the ægis of the Royal Aeronautical Society.

The alternative of increasing subscriptions has been considered by your Council, and they are willing to try to carry on if every member pays £1 increased subscription this year and a subscription of £3 3s for all future years. Even if this is done, however, there is so much printing on hand that there will probably be a loss on this year's working unless a substantial increase in membership takes place, or a liberal endowment is forthcoming. The Council appreciate the loyalty and enthusiasm of the present members, which has helped the Institution to continue its activities during the trying period through which the aeronautical industry has been passing. They feel, however, that the position of increasing prosperity and more assured future in which that industry now finds itself, should have resulted in a larger measure of support for this Institution than has been the case.

Reference to the Balance Sheets of the Institution will show what an extraordinary amount has been accomplished with a very minimum of expenditure, and when the position which the Institution holds in the Aeronautical World is realised, it will be seen how important it is to prevent it from a dissolution.

Should the suggested amalgamation take place it will take effect on and from June 30th next.

The fact that the flourishing Australian Branch will cease to exist if the amalgamation with the Royal Aeronautical Society takes place is a cause of some anxiety to the Council, and it is understood that their members will become overseas associate Fellows of the Royal Aeronautical Society separately, but not as a branch.

The Council, having carefully considered the question in all its aspects, have come to the conclusion that the Institution of Aeronautical Engineers cannot be carried on unless one of the two alternatives mentioned is adopted.

The text of the agreement is reproduced below

TERMS OF AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE INSTITUTION OF AERONAUTICAL ENGINEERS
AND
THE ROYAL AERONAUTICAL SOCIETY

I The name and title of the Society shall be known as "The Royal Aeronautical Society" The Journal, published documents and notepaper shall contain after the title, the words "with which has been incorporated the Institution of Aeronautical Engineers"

II *Rules* No immediate alterations are suggested to the rules and regulations of the Royal Aeronautical Society, but it is recommended that a Committee shall be set up as soon as possible after this agreement is ratified by the two Societies to consider amendments to the rules and to make recommendations The Committee shall consist of a Chairman and four Members, two at least being former members of the Institution of Aeronautical Engineers

III *Membership* There shall be five grades of membership, as follows

			£	s	d
Fellows	Annual	Subscription	5	5	0
Associate Fellows	"	"	3	3	0
Members	"	"	3	3	0
Associate Members	"	"	2	2	0
Students	"	"	1	1	0

The qualifications for the different grades of membership shall be those in force for the Royal Aeronautical Society

IV *Subscriptions* The annual subscriptions shown in (III) shall come into force on January 1st, 1926

V *Corresponding Grades of Membership* On amalgamation, Members of the Institution with Honours Diploma shall be offered Fellowship of the Society Other Members and associate Members shall be offered associate Fellowship of the Society Associates of the Institution (non-technical) shall be offered Membership or associate Membership of the Society At some convenient time after amalgamation, the associate Fellowship list shall be examined with a view to inviting selected associate Fellows to become Fellows

VI *Entrance fees* The present entrance fees to the Royal Aeronautical Society shall apply until revised by the Council, but members of the Institution who are not in arrears with their subscriptions to the Institution shall not be called upon to pay entrance fees on amalgamation

VII The amalgamation shall take effect as from June 30th, 1925, and the

balance of funds and other assets in the possession of the Institution on that date shall be transferred to the Royal Aeronautical Society on that date

VIII Immediately after amalgamation arrangements will be made to co-opt on the Council of the Royal Aeronautical Society two members of the Institution of Aeronautical Engineers nominated by the present Council of the Institution. Of the two co-opted members one shall hold office for two years

4 Called upon by the CHAIRMAN, the SECRETARY read correspondence received from the following members

<i>In favour of the Amalgamation</i>	<i>Against the Amalgamation</i>	<i>Neutral</i>
Mr F G Brettell	Mr J C Atkinson Mr F W Garrett Mr A E Gelston Mr H C Newton Mr P Roach-Pierson Mr O E Simmonds Mr C W Tinson	Mr F Koolhoven

5 The meeting was thrown open for discussion by the CHAIRMAN, who remarked as follows

The Institution really cannot carry on under present conditions and the present rate of subscription. It has been up-hill work all the time, and although the Council do not recommend one alternative more than another, they simply state the case for consideration of members

The following members then spoke in the order given

FLIGHT-LIEUT NORTON —I am entirely against the amalgamation, not that I say anything in disparagement of the Royal Aeronautical Society, but I look upon the objects of the two bodies as entirely dissimilar. I should be very much in favour of increased subscription, and would do anything I could to help obtain more members

DR THURSTON —In the best interests of the Royal Aeronautical Society and the country generally, I should very much regret the amalgamation. There is a clear feeling that the Institution of Aeronautical Engineers can do a great work for the country if it is free from certain limitations, and we are not in any way interfering with the field of the Royal Aeronautical Society. Hardly any paper which has been given before the Institution for several years past could have been given if there had been an amalgamation, and that in itself would have been a loss, but the mere fact that we exist quickens interest in aeronautics. I believe it has a vast future, and the fact that we are going through great difficulties now, and are tied up for money, does not

mean that in five to ten years we shall have the same difficulties. Aeronautics is bound to go ahead from a commercial point of view. We are now in the position that the motor-car industry was before legislation removed the red flag and the man in front of the motor-car. At that time it looked as if the future of the motor-car was in any case limited, but it has gone right ahead, and aeronautics in a few years' time will step largely into the place now occupied by the motor industry, and become one of the main systems of transport.

We want to keep the industry free, so that it can go ahead as quickly as possible, knowing it is of vast importance to the country both from a commercial and a defence point of view. I should regret any step which would limit or in any way hold back this development, believing that healthy criticism and independent work and devoted self-sacrifice is really what the country needs. It does not want little preserves into which those who, perhaps, are able to touch the magic of invention, are not allowed to enter, it needs an Institution that is helpful to those who are working for the future of aeronautics. It is because I am so convinced that the Institution of Aeronautical Engineers is devoting its special attention to the practical encouragement and practical application of aeronautics, that I think we can do our work as a separate body without interfering with the senior society, which devotes itself to pure science, and I shall strongly oppose the question of an amalgamation.

THE HON SECRETARY —I am going to ask you to vote in favour of this amalgamation, and the question now comes as to why, as Honorary Secretary, I should wish the Institution to disappear.

I have been thinking it over for a long time, and the first thing I had to find out was, why there was an objection to the Royal Aeronautical Society. The second thing was, why is it that the work we do seems to meet with more approval in some directions? I think the difference is probably due to the policy of the Council. The Council is elected by the members, and if the Council does not do what the members wish, it is the members' fault, consequently it would be perfectly possible for the Royal Aeronautical Society to do identically the same work as the Institution if the members so wished. In the present state of aeronautics none of us are very rich, and there is not the affluence that exists in the motor trade. To ask members to support two Institutions is a big drain on their resources, it means £6 15s upwards per year, and it seems to me that more good would result from having one body only and taking the trouble to turn up at a General Meeting of the Royal Aeronautical Society and to put up men for the Council who would have the same point of view as yourselves, and see if it is not possible to get the desired effect from one society instead of two.

Criticism is good, and there is no doubt the Royal Aeronautical Society have altered their outlook generally owing to the existence of the Institution. For instance, it was the push of the Institution that made them commence to

hold examinations, and it has also made itself felt in their lectures, which of late are not so entirely beyond one's interest. Formerly they were often just a "washy" talk with the main object of congratulating somebody or other.

It seems to me that if the Institution amalgamated with the Society it would infuse a new element of about 100 members, that is, some 15 per cent, and if they pulled together and tried to get the Institution's work done through the Royal Aeronautical Society, they would succeed in doing so at half the cost of running the two bodies.

I would point out that we must have a clear two-thirds majority for or against the motion before the meeting. If we have only half and half there would be nothing to do but to definitely shut down.

CAPTAIN NEWENHAM TRAVERS —Referring to clause VIII of the Agreement, what proportion will two Council members form of the total Council of the Royal Aeronautical Society?

THE HON SECRETARY —At present we have Mr Manning and Mr Tinson. With two more members that will be four in all, which is a very favourable percentage from the point of view of our membership.

CAPTAIN NEWENHAM TRAVERS —One of the letters read by the Secretary referred to our extinction. I do not think it would mean our extinction, but rather the extinction of the Royal Aeronautical Society, except that they would be the senior society. I am rather inclined to agree that at present there is not a great deal of room for two bodies. Possibly one strong society would be rather better than two which are rather insufficiently supported.

MR HOWARTH —With regard to the letters which were read. They appear as 8 to 1 against amalgamation, which I think is a very important percentage indicating the feeling of absent members.

If the amalgamation takes place it will only be a question of about another 80 members, as already many of our members belong to both bodies. I fail to see how we should gain many seats on their Council, and while we have a minority we shall be at a loss.

The chief aspect is the academic interest of the Royal Aeronautical Society. They have not wanted the practical man, and practical applications have been turned down unless they showed University qualifications. They are now trying to get over the difficulty, and there have been many letters from certain practical people who have applied for admission, and it has been pointed out that they can take an examination, write a thesis, or special cases will be considered. That means that certain people would not be wanted there unless they were at the top of the tree. I come from a hot-bed of the Royal Aeronautical Society, and they look down with disdain on the "usurpers," and think them a nuisance, yet they are now willing to seek financial assistance from these "inferior" people.

If it is a question of increased subscriptions, I think that this institution, which is doing useful work all the time, could go on independently, as I do not consider that the practical interest would be supported by the Royal Aeronautical Society

MR RINGWOOD —The proposal to amalgamate was a complete surprise to me, but I certainly am inclined to think that we cannot go on under present conditions. The suggestion is that we go on by increased subscriptions, but last year you had to exclude 38 members because they did not pay the then subscription. Personally I have no objection whatever to the increased subscription, but we have made no new members during the last year. Have we any chance of getting new members at a subscription of £3 3s ?

I should also like to know whether the Australian Branch members have been advised of the proposed amalgamation

THE HON SECRETARY —With regard to members removed from the roll owing to unpaid subscriptions, I should like to say that in practically every case the member had not paid for three or four years

Referring to the Australian Branch, the members are not in possession of the formal notices at this date, because there has not been time for them to receive them. I would say however, that, curiously, the Royal Aeronautical Society wrote direct to the Honorary Secretary of the Branch last Christmas without any of us being aware of it. I did not hear of it till six weeks afterwards from the Secretary of the Royal Aeronautical Society, and it was an extract from the Branch Honorary Secretary's letter which I read this evening. At that time the negotiations were supposed to be confidential, and I myself did not know what decisions had been arrived at by the Committee dealing with the proposed amalgamation

MR HOULBERG —I was rather amused at our Honorary Secretary's proposition to join the Royal Aeronautical Society and then attempt to influence them. With our small membership in comparison with theirs I do not know how we could influence them at a General Meeting. Another point is the financial side, as that is the subject which is affecting us, it would be interesting to our members to glance at the last Balance Sheet of the Royal Aeronautical Society, which shows a deficit of £300. What we should do if we joined them would be to jump from the frying pan into the fire. We are being asked to cease being a society that is paying its way, and throw in our lot with a society that has been making a deficit for years

Another point is the rather serious breach of conduct on the part of the Royal Aeronautical Society, firstly by publishing details of the amalgamation business before our own members knew of it, and secondly, writing direct to Australia without giving our own Council an opportunity of putting it before the Branch members. These two incidents alone should be sufficient to influence our members. If we do amalgamate it means an increased sub-

scription, so that we are again, in the same position. We should have to pay more to keep them, when we could keep our own Institution going with the increased subscription. I am strongly in favour of a higher subscription for the Institution, and carrying on. I am convinced that the success of any society is purely financial, and until the Royal Aeronautical Society can show a better Balance Sheet, I am against any proposal to join them.

MR MANNING —I am in favour of this amalgamation. I think that in a matter of this sort we have to face a few facts.

The first is that for any science of this type we want one single, strong body. If you divide forces there is bound to be weakness.

There are certain other facts. There is no question that the Royal Aeronautical Society has the prestige (I believe it was founded in the 1860's), and is recognised by the Air Ministry, and it has the designation Royal.

Everyone so far has been talking as if this Institution would lose its identity, it will not, but there will be a definite amalgamation. I have no doubt whatever that there are 90 members (some of whom are already members of the Royal Aeronautical Society), who can, if they wish, dominate that Society, chiefly by attending their meetings.

(Several members here interjected that the Royal Aeronautical Society meetings were always held at 5.30 p.m., an hour at which very few people can attend.)

MR MANNING —We must see that their meetings are held at a suitable time.

Re finance, several people have pointed out that there was a loss on their last Balance Sheet, but many economies have now been effected, and a good Balance Sheet should be shown next year.

The point is that the Institution cannot possibly carry on at present, and we may not, even on an increased subscription. There is no question whatever that amalgamation with the Royal Aeronautical Society would be a good thing.

I understand that a circular letter has been sent to certain members of the Institution, saying that we have to decide whether the Institution shall cease to exist. It does not cease to exist, it is merely an amalgamation of the two bodies. Regarding the opinion that we shall become the recruiting ground of the Royal Aeronautical Society, I want to see the Society become our recruiting ground.

With regard to the Australian Branch, I do not think there will be any difficulty in their carrying on as a separate branch under the combined Society.

I see there is a suggestion that our students will be scattered, but that is not the case, as they will become students of the Royal Aeronautical Society, and receive the same privileges.

As already mentioned, it will be very difficult for the Institution to carry on

even at a subscription of £3 3s There are many members who have already fallen out even on a subscription of £2 2s

I appeal to you that the finest thing we can do is to have one single, strong body, and those of us who are strong practical men will, by joining the Society, and voting and attending their meetings, be able to make the Society a useful one We shall in that way forward the interest of aeronautics We must take a broad view of this matter, the interests of the Institution are, after all, subsidiary to the interests of the science as a whole, and we want to keep the interest of the whole science alive

MR WINGFIELD —I entirely disagree If any fact emerges from this dubious and ill-worded agreement, it is that the sum of £60, the present balance of the Institution money, and its assets, furniture, etc., should be handed over for, as far as I can see, no return whatever I do think that all this difficulty about lack of membership is being approached in an unsatisfactory way The thing is for its existing members to get new ones If each member undertakes to get one new one, the difficulty has been solved

THE HON SECRETARY —I should like to say here that Mr Wingfield very kindly drafted out the notice of this meeting, and the Chairman's Speech, in legal form, for which our hearty thanks are due to him (A unanimous vote of thanks to Mr Wingfield for his services was then passed)

CAPT SAYERS —I cannot agree with Mr Manning's views There is room for two societies, the business of the scientist provides knowledge, and the business of the engineer uses it At the end of the war the Royal Aeronautical Society had to face a complete change They could either become an engineering society or remain purely scientific, dealing with an industry which had a big future, or they might deal with affairs which would be good for the engineer They had the option of those three things With a few possible exceptions from distinguished foreigners, I do not think there has been any contribution from the Royal Aeronautical Society in papers which has not already been circulated to those in prominent positions in the industry They have done very little indeed to cater for the engineer On the other hand, the matter has to be looked at from a practical point of view The Institution cash balance is entirely due to the contributions of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Trades, and apart from that there would have been a deficit of something over £200, but the financial position of the Royal Aeronautical Society is not any better than our own—or very little The question therefore comes out that the Royal Aeronautical Society do not want us, but our money That very fact gives us an extremely strong pull on the Royal Aeronautical Society, therefore I quite agree with Mr Manning that if we care to we can have a very great influence in that Society I am sorry to see from the attendance to-night that there does not seem any possibility that we shall There has been, however, a deficit of over £40 on last year's

working, and on our present membership it is very doubtful if the extra guinea will cover it. If we amalgamate with the Royal Aeronautical Society and really pull our way and shake it up, it will be a good thing.

It seems to me that the whole question before us is this: are we going to shut down, or try and shake up the Royal Aeronautical Society? Therefore, much as I regret the amalgamation, I am in favour of it for these reasons.

MR A V ROE —What I feel is this. The Royal Aeronautical Society is rather a "wash-out." They have never encouraged the practical man, and I personally would gladly give five guineas towards the Institution of Aeronautical Engineers if they are to carry on. Perhaps we can have a whip round to see what can be done. Possibly in time we shall become the big Society and the Royal Aeronautical Society the small one. This Institution has been a very live society since its formation. Of course, there are many difficulties, but I really do think that we ought to make an effort to keep it alive.

MR MOLESWORTH —I will promise £5 5s.

DR THURSTON —I will do likewise, and I should like to say that I have received several letters offering various amounts.

MR BRAMSON —I have a promise of £10 10s, and will give £5 5s myself, and shall be very glad to make further efforts. As far as I can gather already, it is not a question of thousands, or even of hundreds.

Why should not every member of the Institution make a real effort to recruit new members? I should be very glad to help in any way possible.

THE HON SECRETARY —If a Committee of members worked together it might be possible.

MR BRAMSON —My own views are that the Institution should in the future have a standing and status corresponding to, say, the Institution of Naval Architects. It is a status that the subject deserves, and the fact that we are just at the beginning of a new era, and that therefore none of us are very strong financially, should not make it possible to force us to finish altogether.

If we would take the time and trouble, I think a Committee might be set up and a rally made to get people together, and let them know that we have now either to make an effort or finish altogether.

THE HON SECRETARY —We have either to accept this agreement to-night, or close down.

MR BRAMSON —I propose that an Emergency Committee be appointed to make a real effort.

MR HOULBERG —I should be pleased to serve on this

DR THURSTON —And I also I have gone into the subject, and, as far as can be seen, if every member contributed one guinea this year and agreed to an additional guinea for every following year, we could carry on, and Mr Howard-Flanders would have the satisfaction of knowing that the members not only know the good work he has done, but that they are also willing to back him We have in Mr Flanders not only a pioneer of aeronautics, but a good man, and he wants a little financial backing I am very much in favour of a Committee being appointed to see what can be done

MR COATES —I do not intend to talk either way I am an Associate Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society as well as a member of the Institution of Aeronautical Engineers, though I know a member of the Royal Air Force, and a man twice as good as I, who could not get into the Royal Aeronautical Society

I have seen the work that Mr Howard-Flanders has done in recreating the Institution from the very start, and I think that what he says is true—that the meetings of the Royal Aeronautical Society have been far too theoretic, but that of late we have noticed in their meetings the effect of the work that has been done by our Institution So I think it is right to say that we are doing the work that the Royal Aeronautical Society is not doing, though the latter has very much improved in its ways I am therefore faced with this fact—I see our Honorary Secretary's work, and I cannot go against his judgment

With regard to raising the subscriptions, I doubt whether even this would make good the deficit If you could get the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders to do as they have previously done, it would pay the subscriptions of 100 members, and then you could carry on The Secretary knows best whether that is likely to continue

MR EVANS —It seems to me that the biggest item on the expenses side is the publications and that it is the only item which could either be reduced by half or cut out altogether for a short while

THE HON SECRETARY —Members do not attend the meetings in great force, and the only thing we can give them is the publication We have many foreign members who receive only the publication

The Chairman has now to ask you to give your vote If you vote for the amalgamation the work is done If you vote in opposition of it we are up against the prospect that we may be able to weather the storm and get the Institution floated properly if there are a sufficient number of enthusiastic members If not, we shut down If you vote against this amalgamation you are voting for a gamble If you decide to carry through I shall be pleased to help you in every way except financially

6 The CHAIRMAN moved

THAT an agreement with the Royal Aeronautical Society in the terms accompanying this Notice of an Extraordinary Meeting be entered into by the Members of this Institution, and that the Council of the Institution are hereby empowered to carry the same into effect

MR MANNING then proposed, and MR OSWALD seconded, that the motion be adopted

MR OSWALD, in seconding the motion, said I think that none of us here really wish to see the Institution close down, but we have to face the hard fact of the financial situation, which is very unfortunate. We have promises of money, but we want it year by year. Are the members prepared to find it every year? At present I think there are about 50 members of this Institution who are also members of the Royal Aeronautical Society. How many of them are going to drop out if you increase the present subscription? That means that they would be paying something like £7 a year, and you know as well as I do, that we cannot afford to do that. I do not want to see the Institution shut down, but we cannot pay our way, and what I want to know is, if we go into debt, who is to pay? I am therefore forced, by the facts of the case, to support this motion

Voting on the motion then took place, the result being

For the motion, 8

Against the motion, 12

THE CHAIRMAN —The result of this meeting being that the proposed amalgamation with the Royal Aeronautical Society has been turned down by the members of the Institution, I have to say that the alternative of increased subscriptions has been considered by the Council, and they are willing to try and carry on if every member pays £1 1s extra this year and £3 3s annual subscription thereafter

On the suggestion of Mr Biamson, I will now call for the formation of an unofficial sub-Committee to consider ways and means

DR THURSTON then undertook to convene such a Committee, and it was decided to hold a meeting at the earliest opportunity and report the findings to the Council. A subscription list for the purpose of providing a fund to enable the Institution to carry on for the remainder of the year was opened, and the amount of £53 13s was promised before the close of the meeting. It was finally decided that when a definite scheme for placing before members had been drawn up, they should receive notice of a further Extraordinary Meeting in a few weeks' time. The meeting then closed