

AVIATION

Design Simplification Urged To Speed Aircraft Production

British Writers Place Blame for Delays on Red Tape And Meticulous Requirements on Non-Essential Points

SIMPLIFIED standards of construction and design for airplane parts where the highest quality of work does not contribute to reliability or strength is urged in the British magazine *The Aeroplane* (July 12).

"When we have weathered the storm which the next few months hold in store for us, we shall really begin to profit by the supplies from the United States," the writer declares. Assuming that enemy onslaughts during the summer and autumn can be withstood, and that pressure on German communications can be maintained throughout the winter, "we must prepare for a terrific offensive against Germany early in the spring of 1941," he urges.

Then, it is said, American-made airplanes and supplies will be invaluable, but "only if some of the red tape and restrictions which are hampering production for us in that country are thrown overboard." However, it is added, this delay "occurs, not in America, but in government departments in this country."

"The squadrons want aeroplanes," the writer states. "They want good aeroplanes. But they do not care two straws whether the seat belts they do up are of an American pattern or of the standard British type. They do not care whether the compasses with which they navigate are of an American design, or whether they were laid out in Timbuc-

too for that matter, so long as they do their job.

"Yet those are instances of the way in which deliveries are being delayed. New chairs are having to be made to take the British type seat-belts in one type of American aeroplane on order; and production of the whole job is being held back in consequence."

Delay in British construction due to bureaucracy is attacked in another magazine, *Flight* (July 11). As an example of "blue tape," this article tells of a manufacturer who was making apparatus for dropping supplies by parachute. They were urgently needed in France at the end of May, but nearly a month later none of the droppers had been accepted, and by that time the need for them in France had passed. Though the Air Ministry had given permission to simplify construction in order to achieve speed, the inspectors, from another department, had not been officially informed, and so would not pass the devices.

Though urging the highest standards of inspection "of all materials used in those parts of the aeroplane failure of which would involve the safety of the machine or detract from its effectiveness as a weapon of war," the magazine advocates that "such standards should not be adhered to for non-stressed parts and such components as do not affect the functional fighting ability of the aeroplane."

Science News Letter, August 17, 1940

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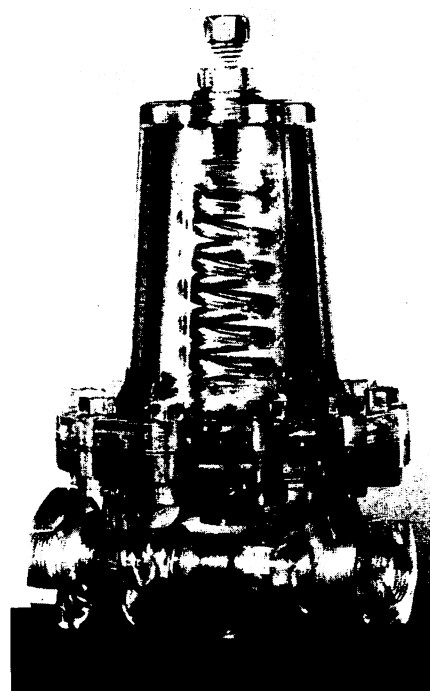
SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

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ENTOMOLOGY

Mexican Ally Found To Fight Invader

MEXICO has come to the aid of the United States, against an invader that came into this country via the southern republic. The invader is the Mexican bean beetle, now a serious crop pest in many eastern and southeastern states. The aid consists in a useful small fly, a natural enemy of the beetle, obtained over a wide range of territory in central Mexico.



TRANSPARENT VALVE

World Fairs have recently been featuring "transparent men" and "transparent women", who show remarkably little reticence in disclosing the most intimate details of their inner workings. Students of biology learn from these transparent models; and following their example, engineers have taken to making working models of valves and other mechanisms in some of the newer plastics. This model of a reducing valve was made in Plexiglas by Dave Swedlow of Hollywood, Calif.

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When the Mexican bean beetle first found its way into this country, back in the time of the first World War, it failed to bring with it any of its natural enemies, which as a rule help to keep insect pests in check, in their native lands. Few of the native American predacious insects attack the beetle, so that it has had a pretty easy time of it while it got in its nefarious work.

Now, two U. S. Department of Agriculture entomologists, B. J. Landis and N. F. Howard, announce that encouraging results have been obtained with the fly, known to science as *Paradexodes epilachnae*. They have been rearing the flies at Columbus, Ohio, for more than ten years, and have recently begun releasing them to attack the beetles. Some 82,000 flies have been turned loose, in 19 states.

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Denmark, cut off from British coal, is producing home supplies of peat and brown coal for next winter's fuel.