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CURTISS AERO FACTORY GOING TO MOVE HERE

Fact Disclosed at Banquet of Board of Trade Last Evening

Subject Under Negotiation For Several Months—Interest- ing Speakers

"I started as a tinker, but I was forced to become first a motorcyclist, then an aviator, because I found that nobody else would ride the machines I built," declared Glenn H. Curtiss, hailed as America's foremost birdman, at a banquet tendered by the Board of Trade at The Stratfield last night, to the aviators and committees in charge of the three-days aviation meet which began this afternoon at the Lake Aerodrome.

That the Curtiss aeroplane factory now located at Hammondsport, New York, may be moved to this city, was disclosed by President Fred Enos of the Board of Trade, who presided as toastmaster.

This announcement was received with loud applause by the assemblage of Bridgeport business men and manufacturers at the banquet.

To a Farmer reporter, Mr. Curtiss later confirmed this statement, and said that he intends to take a good look around Bridgeport with Mr. Enos and talk over the possibilities.

"Of course we're located in a little bit of a place now," said Mr. Curtiss, "and our business is growing so rapidly that we simply must have better facilities. At the same time it's quite a job to pull up the stakes and move. I have been in correspondence with Mr. Enos for some time and he has acquainted me with the many advantages of Bridgeport."

Last night's dinner was entirely informal and was arranged by the Board of Trade as a send-off to the three days which promise to go down in a very important place in Bridgeport's history.

With the exception of J. A. D. McCurdy, who was detained in Washington and did not arrive in Bridgeport until today, the men who are to do the flying at the Bridgeport meet were the guests of honor last evening. The birdmen present last evening included Glenn H. Curtiss, Lincoln Beschy, Lieut. Theodore G. Ellyson, U. S. N., and Lieut. J. E. Fickel, U. S. A.

Oscar Rosson, wireless expert of the New York World was also present. He will attempt to break the world's record for sending wireless messages from an aeroplane at the Bridgeport meet.

Another well known aeronaut who occupied a prominent seat was A. Holland Forbes of Fairfield, famed as a gentleman balloonist.

Other guests included T. T. Tuttle, manager of the flights; Henry Lee, W. W. Bent, Garry Paddock, Joshua Meltzer, P. L. Holzer, Frank Powers of Springfield, W. F. Hobbs, M. E. Brewster-Greene, Wallace A. Smith, M. H. Rogers, A. V. Barber, Sidney E. Hawley, E. H. Havens, Percy Farwell, J. M. Donnelly, T. N. Cullinan, C. H. Morris, W. H. Marigold, J. H. Shannon, S. J. Griffin, I. L. Belden, J. S. Leonard, George Waldo, Jr., Harris Linsay, F. W. Bolande, F. P. Devine, F. A. Strong, A. K. L. Watson, Henry R. Stoddard, H. M. Lyon, Simon Lake, H. H. Brautigan, Robert Miller, Frank D. Bell, D. Fairchild Wheeler, A. M. Cooper, George M. Eames, Charles D. Davis, Fred Enos, J. L. McGovern, Richard Howell, W. E. Burnham, Stephen F. Boucher, Hugh J. Lavery, O. H. Brothwell, Clemens Kloefkorn, C. S. Canfield, M. M. Downer, C. J. Lake, Frank T. Staples, F. A. Bartlett and Thomas Arnold, Jr.

The gathering enjoyed a fine menu, after which Toastmaster Enos called the assemblage to order and wittily introduced the various speakers, the post-prandial exercises being entirely informal and of just the right length to be most enjoyable.

Alderman Hugh Lavery, president of the Common Council was at the banquet to represent Mayor Buckingham. He extended a cordial welcome to the visiting aviators and gave them the freedom of the city.

Mr. Curtiss was the next called upon. He was greeted with warm applause. Mr. Enos introduced him as the foremost man in aviation today, a sentiment which was echoed by other speakers.

"When I started out," said Mr. Curtiss, "it was my ambition to be a business man and a manufacturer. I was forced into business in which I am now engaged. I started as a tinker, but I was obliged to become first motor cyclist and then an aviator, because I found that nobody else would ride the machines I built.

"There's one thing I'm certain I cannot do, and that is, to make a speech. So I'll end by saying that I'll be glad to answer any questions that the gentlemen here may care to ask."

A. Holland Forbes, who followed, declared that the audience had just heard the longest speech Curtiss ever made. Mr. Forbes referred to that historic occasion when Curtiss, on being presented with a medal by the Aero Club of America, responded with "Gentlemen, I thank you!"

Mr. Forbes then described some of his own thrilling experiences in the air, notably in the international balloon race in Germany, and his tumble into the wilds of Kentucky in 1910.

Lieut. J. E. Fickel, U. S. A., who is helping Curtiss develop a war type aeroplane for the U. S. army, sketched very interestingly the battle in the air which is sure to occur, he said, in the next great war.

He told of the use of the aeroplane for scout service in the war and said that if General Kuropatkin had had an aeroplane at the battle of Mukden, the Russians would have won the battle, for they would have been able to detect and forestall the turning movement which won the field for the Japanese.

"There isn't a gun or piece of artillery in use today that can hit an aeroplane except by the merest chance," declared Lieut. Fickel.

"Take an aeroplane flying at a height of 3,000 feet, and at a speed of 60 or 70 miles an hour. The most efficient gun in the world today takes about a second to fire a projectile this height. And in a second, an aeroplane can move 60 or 80 feet. Furthermore, it need not move straight ahead. If it did, its flight might be anticipated by aiming the gun a little forward; but the aviator may move to the right of left,

or up or down, constantly changing the range and baffling the marksmen on the ground.

"The next few years will see great developments in war aeroplanes. The machines of today have not a sufficient range of speed. There is no machine built today which has a range of from 45 to 60 miles an hour. Either they are fast, or they are slow. The war aeroplane should be able to travel 40 to 45 miles an hour when doing scout duty, and 60 to 70 miles an hour when pursuing other aeroplanes, or escaping from others, or dogging the enemy's fire.

"The next great war will actually witness 'the battle in the air' which the novelists used to write about. If the aeroplanes cannot be reached from the ground, they must be fought by other aeroplanes. There are two ways of carrying on this fight. One is by directly colliding with the enemy's aeroplane. This course is sure to be fatal to both machines. The other way is by mounting a piece of field artillery and destroying the enemy's aeroplane.

"Such a piece of field artillery is being perfected now. Two requirements are needed; sufficient lightness and compactness to be easily carried on an aeroplane; freedom from recoil, and 'smoke bullets.'

"Smoke bullets' are so called because they leave a thin trail of smoke behind them, thus enabling the marksmen to trace the exact course of their projectiles. In firing on the ground it is easy to obtain the range by watching the dust kicked up by the missed shots. But in the air there is absolutely nothing to tell the marksman how near or how far away from the target his shots are falling.

"In order to overcome this difficulty, 'smoke bullets' must be used, and in this way it will be possible to accurately direct the fire upon the enemy. Machine guns are desirable, in order to make the fire rapid and continuous"

Lieutenant Theodore Ellyson, U. S. N., who has been assigned with Curtiss by the Secretary of the Navy, declared that the United States navy is entirely indebted to Mr. Curtiss and to him alone, for all the progress that has been made in the development of the aeroplane for use in naval warfare.

The speaker sketched the history-making flights of Ely to and from the cruiser Birmingham, in a Curtiss aeroplane, and later Glenn Curtiss' achievement in rising from the water and descending to the water in a Curtiss hydro-aeroplane.

Each of these achievements, while a step forward, falls short of the goal, declared Lieut. Ellyson.

He then announced that Mr. Curtiss is now on the point of bringing forward an apparatus which will make possible the use of aeroplanes in naval warfare. This apparatus will be so simple that it can be rigged up on the deck of a battleship in five minutes and launch aeroplanes without interfering in any way with the firing of the guns.

In explaining this device to a Farmer reporter later Mr. Curtiss declared that it is designed to meet the needs of present day battleships and aeroplanes without necessitating any changes in either.

"It will make it possible for a battleship to carry a fleet of aeroplanes," he said, "and probably will be of especial use to scout cruisers.

"It might not be possible to launch an aeroplane from the water in rough weather," he added, "and it is quicker and more desirable to send it directly from the deck of a battleship. I think I will have my apparatus ready for a test in the near future."

Christopher J. Lake described the circumstances surrounding the purchase, construction and naming of the Bridgeport Aerodrome.

"It was in 1907," said Mr. Lake, "that I first saw an aeroplane in flight. It was at Hammondsport, N. Y., and the flyer was Glenn H. Curtiss. To my dying day I will never forget the electric thrill I received when I saw Mr. Curtiss mount the machine, with its great outstretched wings and come swooping over my head and directly up into the air."

Mr. Lake then reviewed the difficulty experienced by aviators in finding suitable fields in this part of the country. He said that the idea occurred to him that Bridgeport is a suitable place for the location of an aviation field to be used both for exhibitions and experimental work. For many months he worked on the project, examining the countryside all around Bridgeport, and finally hit upon the old Nutmeg driving park as the finest spot.

Then the naming of the place was a problem. Mr. Lake struggled with the puzzle for a long time. "Connecticut Aerodrome" was suggested, and "Lake Aerodrome," and a number of other names.

It was not until Mr. Lake met President Fred Enos of the Board of Trade that the problem was settled.

"Why, there's only one name that you can properly give it," said Mr. Enos. "Call it the Bridgeport Aerodrome," and Bridgeport Aerodrome it is today.

T. T. Tuttle, manager for Glenn Curtiss, was the last speaker, and declared himself to be the most fortunate man in the world to be associated with such an ideal "boss" on one hand as Glenn H. Curtiss, and such fine co-workers on the other as the civic committees assisting in the aviation meet.