3,000 PLANES A MONTH: Careful Inquiry Shows Real Progress in American Output, Including One Machine Which Is Unburnable

By JAMES ARTHUR SEAVEY.

A CONSIDERABLE amount of land, water, and time, has been fired at long range and short at the aircraft production situation in this country. Of late the fire has been so intense that what parts of speech had been held in reserve have been sent to the first-line trenches. But it has seemed to many quite plain but very good American citizens that much of the discussion has failed either to illuminate or improve a condition that was until recently about as bad as it well could be.

It is not of the slightest assistance to the task of kicking Germany to establish the fact that Gutzon Borglum is the very best sculptor among all the sculptors in the United States, or that he did or did not try to become interested in an aircraft plant, or that some of Colonel Deeds’ ancestors were born in Germany and spelled their name Dietz, or that the Colonel transferred to his wife or his business associate in Dayton, after he had become an officer in the United States Army, shares of stock in companies which, either because of or in spite of his influence, the Aircraft Production Board obtained contracts for aircraft, or even that some of the subsidaries of a certain motor company were hard up for working capital until they got some of these fat contracts.

Let all the charges and innuendoes be admitted to be true, wholly or in part. How will it all add a single cubit to the stature of an airplane? What the American Army in France and in Flanders wants in plenty is American flying machines and plenty of husky young Americans to fly them. And what the American people want to know is: Why is that army overseas does not get what it wants. By this time every schoolboy in Germany knows that the American aircraft program has fallen down, and fallen hard. What the folk here at home, who are paying the war bills of the United States, and who will gladly continue to pay as long as the need exists, wish to know is what has been done to correct past blunders, what is being done to supply Pershing’s troops with the airplanes they need and the men to fly them.

How many aircraft plants, ready for action, are there in this country, anyway? Where are they? What can they turn out? Are they working to their capacity? If not, why not? Can the present capacity be enlarged? Have the owners of the plants received sufficient orders from the Government, or serious assurances of such orders, to justify them in putting good American dollars into a $50 or 100 per cent. factory enlargement? If not, again why not?

It is the purpose of this article to answer some of these questions. In order information was obtained that may be of interest to many of our citizens and, perhaps, valuable to the Government, behind which every true American will stand until Tennyson’s vision has been realized and there has been established, to endure until the dawn of the eternal morning, the Brotherhood of man, the federation of the world. But before going into details, and for the specific purpose of giving all the non-nit and discomfort that is possible to the that cannot burn, as the material of poor Lufbery’s machine burned, and it can be made in the same quantity production in any country where that labor to stop the work. Indeed, these machines can be turned out almost as rapidly as Henry Ford can turn out “flowers” or cylinders for the Liberty Motor. If all Americans and all their war allies cannot go to cheer in this new, then “cheer up” has not meaning for them.

The only thing about the invention that may tend to dangerous and over production is that it is not the product of native inventive genius. To give the name of the one who first thought it up to identify the airplane. At this time that cannot be done. It may be stated, however, that he is a native of a European country, neutral in this war, and he has been working on his invention for several years. The company which is manufacturing it, however, is all American. So convinced has the Government become of the practicality and great usefulness of this new aircraft that its manufacturers are now executing a Government contract.

At the plant where the machines are manufactured some of them are now being fitted with the Liberty Motor. If motor and plane work well together, and tests already made indicate that there will be no trouble on this score, the Secretary of War may make almost any statement he likes regarding the number of aircraft the American Expeditionary Forces will have at their disposal at any given time, and nobody will be able after that time to accuse him of exaggeration. So confident is the manufacturing company that it has solved the problem of aircraft production that when I spoke to one of the officers of a production of 500 a month he replied:

“Why, my dear Sir, that is no production at all. But I do not purpose being doing anything else.”

We do not need any publicity; we do not want any publicity, and we are not going to have any publicity if we can help it. Besides, our tongues are tied officially, and the knot is sealed with the Government seal.

Now, what are the aircraft requirements of the American forces in Picardy?

(Coastal Pleasure)

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Two Captured German War Planes, from Which Americans Are Making Desirable Features. The One on the Right Is an Albatros Monoplane.

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American aircraft are turning out a very considerable number of "no weir" every week. And batteries, armored cars, observers, and trainers all have to be equipped with the engines in drive. The Liberty Motor may yet be a complete success, but the fact remains that, in spite of all its faults, it does work. Our engineers, and a very considerable one, told me that the Liberty Motor could never be used in fighting planes, because its vibration would make the planes so dangerous. And in talking with flying engines, I have been somewhat surprised to find that any of them hold that, of all the different types of planes, the buzzing plane is the most important.

"Of course," said one of my experts, "the buzzing plane is important. It’s in its class in every way as an engine, and our company has tested many different ones, and has been able to make it work, and the others are the same. But, what does the buzzing plane mean? What does it mean to say, for example, that the buzzing plane is the most important?"

"I say that." I replied. "I say that the buzzing plane is the most important." And I went on to explain that the buzzing plane was important because it was the only plane that could be made to work in any kind of weather, and that it was the only plane that could be made to work in any kind of weather.”