

# CORRESPONDENCE

## A STANDARD BLIND-LANDING AID

SIR,

May I take this opportunity of thanking Sir Robert Watson-Watt for his lucid article on radio aids in the last number of the *Journal*. His remarks as to the absence of a clearly defined policy on radio, radar-navigational, and blind-landing aids for Civil Aviation touch upon a problem which I believe urgently requires solution if Civil Aviation is to achieve the reliability, punctuality and efficiency of other public transport systems. The problem is that of producing *one* really reliable blind-landing aid.

Over much of Europe we now have a modicum of navigational aids to ensure a reasonable and safe standard of track keeping and schedule maintenance. When, however, we are faced with the problem of taking off or getting down in conditions of low weather minima (when exact height and the distance and bearing from the airfield are vital) we encounter a deplorable inadequacy of facilities.

We have several stations in this country and the Continent supplied with GCA, Rebecca, or scs 51 equipment, but this is of itself not a satisfactory state of affairs. A multiplicity of landing aids means a multiplicity of airborne equipment types; this is neither economical nor prudent. Blind-landing techniques are perfected only as a result of much continued practice by Aircraft Officers; the greater the number of techniques to be practised and perfected, the lower, in general, will be the over-all standard achieved.

During the past two years we have seen a number of pamphlets and reports describing the properties of the existing or projected schemes to assist aircraft in taking off or landing in conditions of extremely poor visibility. It is obvious, however, that, for reasons of economy and efficiency, a standardization to *one* aid only should be achieved within a certain area (as, for example, Europe); little progress seems to have been made towards this standardization. Would it not be possible for the various manufacturers and technical experts to get together, pool their resources, and, with the realization that only *one* aid is required, to work as a single entity?

Not until every main airfield is equipped with a standard aid which has proved itself to be reliable in all conditions, and crews have been trained to a high standard in its use, and at the same time aircraft are fitted with the necessary equipment, can the punctuality and reliability that are the essential requirements of any transport system be achieved.

The sooner the experts can agree among themselves and work as one team, the sooner shall we achieve that necessary high standard of operation.

I hope the Institute will take an active interest in this problem; few could be of more pressing importance.

Yours faithfully,  
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