

the Governments concerned to the assistance which they can render, not only in this regard, but also by assuming responsibility for the actual erection of mooring-mast stations.

13. *Further Development.*—As stated in paragraph 3, further development has been regarded as dependent on the construction of new airships specifically designed to meet the requirements of the service. In order to enable the Imperial Conference to arrive at a decision in respect of a complete scheme of Imperial communications by airship, the Committee have felt it necessary to consider estimates for the period ensuing on the inauguration of the service, which will include an adequate constructional programme. In paragraph 10 it has been stated that neither the one-year period nor the two-year period can properly be regarded as complete in themselves; to reap the fullest advantage it is essential that each should be held to be but the stepping-stone to further development. Such development should convert the experimental flights towards South Africa, which will have been undertaken in the inaugural period, into a permanent regular service, and should make possible the alternative route via South Africa to Australia. Both, however, are dependent upon two things: First, upon the provision of new ships. It is estimated that ten to twelve ships of the 4,000,000 cubic feet type would suffice to maintain a fortnightly service from England to Egypt, India, South Africa, and Australia. The first of such airships would probably cost in the neighbourhood of £300,000. Secondly, both developments would depend upon the provision of masts and bases. Before the route to South Africa could be adequately extended to Australia it would be necessary to provide for the equipment of a permanent base in South Africa; and before the route to Australia could be considered consolidated it would be necessary to provide the equipment of a permanent base in Australia. It is estimated that the additional cost of such bases, over and above the mooring-mast stations, would be in the neighbourhood of £400,000 each. In addition, it must not be overlooked that the construction of additional airships would entail the provision of additional shed accommodation at the English base, the cost of which may be estimated to involve an expenditure in the neighbourhood of £500,000.

In view of the above considerations, the Committee have considered estimates for the development of the service over a further period of three years.

The estimated expenditure involved would be—

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Capital expenditure	4,545,000
Maintenance of ground organization	901,000
Allowance for contingencies and unforeseen expenditure (say)	1,500,000

to which must be added the cost of upkeep and operation of the airships themselves. This latter item would increase from £160,000 per annum at the end of the preliminary two-year period to £1,094,000 per annum, omitting special allowance for contingencies, by the beginning of the six-year period, when regular fortnightly services were being operated to India, South Africa, and Australia. The capital expenditure includes the provision of twelve new airships.

The Committee have felt it necessary to state that these figures are given with the greatest reserve. Details will be found in Appendix C.

As regards the inaugural period, the extension of the route to South Africa, and the opening of the alternative routes to Australia, must entail the provision of mooring-mast stations, in addition, as already pointed out, to the ultimate provision of bases equipped with sheds. The cost of the necessary mooring-mast stations on the route Egypt-South Africa-Australia, and back to Egypt via Ceylon, is estimated at £275,000. (See Appendix D.) This organization would only be sufficient to meet the requirements of demonstrational flights. Two such flights to Australia, via South Africa, would cost in the neighbourhood of £33,000, and, whilst the Committee have given every consideration to the great educational value of such flights as a means of establishing the ultimate possibilities of the service, it is for consideration whether the results achieved would be commensurate with the expense involved or such as would be ensured by a regular programme of development.