

# HYDRO-AEROPLANES ON WINDERMERE.

## REPLY TO CANON RAWNSLEY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Canon Rawnsley has written you a poetic appeal calling on all lovers of the English Lakes to rise and protest against this new invasion of the charms of Windermere. He will not complain if I point out that his appeal is one-sided. He represents flying as a dangerous pastime, indulged in at the expense of the surrounding neighbourhood. He does not tell you of the country's need of more trained flying men and of better and more diverse machines. Or how the United States Navy have adopted hydro-aeroplanes, or how Germany and Holland are anxiously inquiring all about the new machine which he is so anxious to wipe off Windermere. He does not tell you that Windermere is an ideal place for experimental purposes—more than five square miles of open flat area—that there is no other place so good, taking it all in all, in the whole country, perhaps even no other suitable place available; that my machine reduces the risks of flying to a *minimum*; or that almost every one who has seen it flying agrees that it adds to the great natural beauty, like a fine bird, between water and sky, in the changing lights.

It is true, as Canon Rawnsley tells you, that my plane does not fly on Sundays or over Bowness or Windermere. Nor does it ever pass over, or too near, the steamer-loads of cheerful tourists, who, so far from being afraid of it, are delighted to see the new, interesting, and beautiful bird-like thing. "Windermere is a real national asset." Yes, certainly. Let us make use of the asset, and in doing so improve its value.

With poetic licence the Canon continues, "It may be imagined with what alarm the whole neighbourhood has heard" that I have "suddenly determined to turn Bowness itself into a manufacturing centre," &c. The fact is that I am erecting one shed near Cockshot Point. It will be painted a quiet green to match the foliage by which it will be largely screened. It will also be hidden from Bowness by existing boathouses, some of which are larger and taller. In no accepted sense will it be a "factory." The rules of the lake will, of course, be observed, and it will be clearly impossible to attempt flights (as suggested) from any such place.

Then it is asserted that "there will be real danger." My object has been from the first to eliminate every source of danger in flying that could be eliminated. I claim to have succeeded so far. Surely it must be obvious that if I cause an accident I do the greatest injury to the objects I have in view, and also incur serious losses myself. Another thing which could not be gathered from Canon Rawnsley's letter is that I come of many generations of Westmorland men, and yield to no one in love for the scenery and loyalty to the interests of my county.

But many, who along with me learnt during the war in South Africa the value of scouting, believe that scouting by hydro-aeroplane will shortly become a necessity for the safety of this island—the island which contains the scenes and the faces we love. England is too far behind other Powers in aircraft and in flying men for both Army and Navy; and although I can now offer a successful British hydro-aeroplane, to adapt it for use on the sea, for carrying an observer, a wireless installation, &c., many further experiments will be necessary. These are already in progress, but it is quite possible for well-meant but uninformed clamour to put it out of my power to make them. Would not this be the real "shortsightedness"?

I appeal to all lovers of our country to rise and protest against this new and short-sighted attempt to throttle the young and struggling, but to England most necessary, science of flying from water.

I am, Sir, &c.,

Windermere, Jan. 9. E. W. WAKEFIELD.