

there was no Spitfire to carry out local ascents.

A very high standard appears to be expected from the Met. team, and they are subjected to severe criticism if their forecast errs in the timing of best conditions. This timing is, of course, of special importance in racing, as it decides the moment chosen by competitors for making the start of their timed "run." In my opinion the forecasting was very good, and I was most impressed by its accuracy in regard to the strength and distribution of "lift," which is something upon which I have found British forecasting, at the numerous National Championships I have attended, to be irritatingly misleading.

In a talk with W. Parczewski (leader of the Met team from the Polish Institute of Hydrology and Meteorology—P.I.H.M.) he modestly declared that his success was not the result of any magic formula, but followed from ten years of intensive study of soaring conditions in the closest collaboration with pilots, to whom he gave warm praise for their diligence in collecting data. Certainly the manner in which the met. briefing was given catered so thoroughly for the requirements of the competitors that it left little scope for questioners, and was thereby largely responsible for the expeditious manner in which "briefing" was disposed of every morning. Parczewski shares the honour of the Polish two-seater record with the pilot A. Brzuska, having reached 9,293 metres (30,489 ft.), and he has recently published a very interesting work on gliding meteorology.

Leszno is situated in West Poland, about 50 miles S. of Poznan, and the district over which most of the flying took place is a rolling plain, with low relief, typical of that part of Europe, being well drained by numerous rivers and lakes, and has an altitude of 200-400 ft. Forests are numerous but not of unbroken extent, and the light soil is well tilled and extensively cultivated. Meadows are situated only adjacent to the rivers, and, being too soft for the towing planes, were usually avoided in forced landings. The only high relief traversed was on the goal flight to Kielce, in the neighbourhood of which wooded hills rose to 1,500 ft. a.s.l.

We were surprised to find that soaring conditions were only equivalent to a good summer day in England. Cloud base was usually about 1,200 m, and only once rose to 1,500 m.

giving the best lift upon that same day, namely, a fairly regular 3 m/sec. Thus perished the long cherished belief that Polish performances were a product of conditions never experienced in Great Britain. Apart from thunderstorms, which occurred in late afternoon or evening, and produced the only rain, wind speeds never rose above 35 km/h (22 M.P.H.).

#### Results

These have been exhaustively analysed by Prof. Humen. Considering that the Polish pilots had practiced at Leszno during the three weeks preceding the contest, special praise is due to the three visitors who appeared in the first ten. These are G. Mezo, of Hungary, flying a Junius 18, who came second; M. Finescu of Rumania, in IS-5, placed eighth; and H. Lambert of France, in Air 102, ninth. Miss W. Szemplinska, who teaches aeronautical engineering in a



The Polish "Jaskolka" flown by the winner, Edward Makula of Poland.

Warsaw technical college, was seventh, and Mme. Choynet-Gohard, French women's champion, was thirteenth. The first nine pilots (i.e. one-fourth) succeeded in completing every task set, which I think reflects considerable credit upon the Contest Commissioners also.

In consequence of these Contests, no less than seven National Records were established for speed over the 100 kms. triangle.

Rumania (M. Finescu)	72.9 km/h
Hungary (G. Mezo)	69.1 km/h
Czechoslovakia (J. Kumpost)	65.1 km/h
France (Mme Choynet-Gohard)	61.5 km/h
Great Britain (D. A. Smith)	59.8 km/h
Bulgaria (G. Petrow)	51.5 km/h
East Germany (H. Schmiedeke)	45.7 km/h

I attribute my own poor showing not to flying a strange machine (as was so generously suggested by the Poles) but to inexperience in the tactics of racing. Thus I found myself

doing one of two things: having decided at the start that, at all costs, I must complete the course, I would duly arrive to find I had made the slowest time or, having decided that "today, I race!", experiencing the exhilaration of passing everything in sight only to end up in a field somewhere round the course.

It is impossible to look back upon Leszno without comparing it with the F.A.I. Championships at Camphill, especially as regards the type of contest and method of marking. It has always seemed to me that the F.A.I. has been unimaginative in these matters, and lags behind, instead of stimulating its sportsmen to develop new skills. The 300 km. triangle race sponsored at Leszno would not have been declared "no contest" under the Camphill rules, and it is by setting such ambitious tasks that the standard of skill is most likely to be raised. For some strange reason the F.A.I. has set itself against a Team Cham-

pionship, despite the fact that the Team Spirit is considered a virtue in most other fields of sport. Leszno showed that a new field for skill can be opened up by team flying.

Not only has the F.A.I. rejected the British proposals to abolish the superfluous title "World Champion of two-seater gliders," but it has done nothing to avoid the development of bigger and more expensive two-seaters requiring bigger and more expensive launching devices. The same applies to equipment. No sooner had skill at navigation been accepted as a desirable quality in a World Champion, than radio is installed to relieve him of this tiresome chore! If any reader thinks that the Poles are going too far in banning radio from Championships, I must point out the danger of more and more outside aid being fed to the pilot via more and more expensive instruments until we are uncertain whether the pilot won the contest or some electronic "brain" (costing \$n millions) installed in a five-storied block 10,000 miles away.