

“FOR SOIL STABILISATION”

From FLIGHT, 13th July, 1939

THERE are many who feel that the day of the turf aerodrome, particularly on clay or similar non-porous subsoils over which heavy traffic is to be expected, has come to an end, or will do so very shortly. In this connection it is an interesting fact that in America the authorities have been quick to appreciate the advantages of soil stabilisation in connection with the runways and aprons of aerodromes.

Until quite recently this method of soil treatment in Britain was regarded with a certain scepticism, but in view of the progress made on the other side of the Atlantic, together with the results of research and experimental work that have been carried out over here, the advantages of soil stabilisation are rapidly winning general approval.

In England two well-known companies have been closely co-operating for some time on this type of work. In the belief that soil stabilisation must come, and realising that the work and responsibilities entailed were rapidly exceeding the limits of the two organisations, it was decided to form a separate company, known as British Runways Ltd., the controlling interests of which are held by the En-Tout-Cas Co., Ltd., and British Bitumen Emulsions Ltd.

Although British Runways Ltd., has only been incorporated for little more than a month many thousands of pounds' worth of work is already in hand. A contract has been started for the construction of an apron in front of the hangars at Ringway Airport, Manchester, while a War Office contract for the construction of an extensive parade ground at Devizes is also well in hand. Incidentally it should be noted that soil stabilisation can be applied to other spheres, such as road and path making. Until the formation of the new company it had been necessary to add and mix the soil with the correct proportion of bitumen emulsion by rather crude methods. To overcome this difficulty a special Woods mixing machine has been imported from America. This machine is capable of mixing and laying four thousand yards of runway per day. It is of the same type as those which have been used in America on most of the big runway jobs which have been carried out for the United States Army and other Government departments.

Although British Runways, Ltd., is a new company, it is backed with the knowledge and experience gained by the two controlling organisations, which, during the past two or three years, have been carrying out a great deal of experimental work and practical testing under the supervision of American experts brought over to this country specifically for this purpose.

All enquiries concerning the new company should be addressed to British Runways, Ltd., whose offices are at Eagle House, 109, Jermyn Street, London, S.W.1.