

WHAT'S IN THE AIR?

DISCUSSED BY FAMOUS AVIATOR.
-London-

(R.E.J.).

The relative air strength of the various powers is very much in the news just now. Mr. Little, who was navigator and assistant-pilot to Captain Barnard and the Duchess of Bedford on the record-flights to India and back in 7½ days, and Capetown and back in 19 days, is going to take the microphones.

(Mr. Little). The important fact is that Britain in the past few years has slipped from first air power to sixth.

This revelation has caused considerable apprehension in circles which accept the ability to defend ourselves as our first duty.

France now boasts three-thousand war 'planes.

Russia has almost as many.

The United States is within a hundred of either of these nations.

Japan is credited with 22,000.

Italy with some 1500; while Britain, possesses only 1434.

Notwithstanding these figures, I would like to point out that numbers are not everything.

There is such a thing as quality, and my knowledge of British pilots still encourages me to think that we may not be sixth on the list on that count.

Commercial flying cannot be ignored, while considering this question, and Britain can claim to have "blazed quite a number of trails" in this direction.

One unfortunate fact seems to me to be obvious - - that if Britain inaugurates a new air program, as many are suggesting, we cannot afford to be first, let us at any rate be second to none.

Such a position is surely the right of every British citizen.