

FLYING AT WINDERMERE

Admiralty Tests the Machine.

The admiralty have responded to Mr. E. W. Wakefield's invitation to inspect his hydro-aeroplane on Windermere, and on Saturday morning Lieut. Longmore, R.N., the Admiralty's aviation specialist, had the machine out for testing purposes. The Lieutenant, Mr. Wakefield, and the latter's pilot, Mr. Adams, were the only persons present when the tests were made, the advent of an official from the Admiralty having been kept a secret. But the passengers on one of the lake steamers had a fine view of at least one test—the most severe to which the machine was put. In the invitation to the Admiralty Mr. Wakefield mentioned several points of interest, including the following—(1) The possibility of training pilots; (2) the question of selling the machine to the Admiralty for the development of aviation in connection with the navy; (3) the possibility of obtaining the assistance of the Admiralty in testing the machine on salt water. The tests began about 9-15 in the morning and continued until 10-45. The conditions were distinctly favourable, the wind velocity being about five miles an hour and the lake calm. Both Lieut. Longmore and Mr. Adams took the machine into the air. No long distance flights were made, the object of the Admiralty expert being to test the capacity of the hydro-aeroplane in respect to flights from, and alighting on, the water, and its behaviour in the water especially when there was what is known nautically as a little lop on. "Oh yes, the machine behaved very well, so far as I am concerned," Mr. Wakefield told our representative, who saw him after the tests. "There was no damage done to the machine, and she did everything that was asked of her. An interesting incident occurred during the trial. One of the passenger steamers plying on the lake came by and the wash affected the motor boat in which I was with Lieutenant Longmore. "How will the wash affect your machine?" he said. I replied, 'Oh the machine doesn't mind the wash of the steamer,' and on a signal to Mr. Adams to go into the wash he did so. The machine rose from the wash, made a circle and alighted in the wash again." The people on board had a good view of what was going forward. "How did they take it," observed Mr. Wakefield. "Well, so far as we could tell they didn't seem to be frightened but rather to enjoy it. They didn't seem to think they were going to be sent to destruction, not a bit of it." Questioned with regard to the 35 miles' speed which had to be attained for the machine to rise from the water, Mr. Wakefield expressed the opinion that Lieutenant Longmore rose at a less speed than that, as he got up quicker than the pilot had done hitherto. Mr. Wakefield was then asked as to experiments which are being carried out with a view to improving his machine. "We want to test it with the engine in front instead of behind. This would add to its stability. Then we want to try to get it to carry a passenger in addition to the pilot, and we want to adapt it for use in weather in which at present it would not be safe to fly it. Those are three principal aims of our experiments at the present moment." The War Office, Mr. Wakefield mentioned in conclusion, in reply to his communication to them, had informed him that as the matter was one for the navy they had referred the matter to the Admiralty. Certainly that department had not been slow in moving, and the result of their expert's trial of the hydro-aeroplane will be awaited with keen interest.