

The New York Times

Sun, Feb. 26, 1928, 1-4;2-4thru7,V.77,N.25.600

FUELLESS MOTOR IMPRESSES EXPERTS

*W.B. Stout. Says, "Invention Works Uncannily - Washington
Think It Important.*

Built on Radio Principle

Armature Winding New - Inventor Inspired by Young Son Lindbergh Flies Here

DETROIT Mitch Feb 25. W.B. Stout head of the Stout Air Lines and designer of the all-metal trimotored Ford monoplane, declared here today that he had seen what he characterized as an "impressive" demonstration of the Hendershot fuelless motor two weeks ago in Pittsburgh.

Lester J. Hendershot, the inventor, and his associate D. Barr Peat, who is manager of the Bettis Field at McKeesport Pa., demonstrated the motor secretly yesterday in a hangar at Selfridge Field. This block test was witnessed by Major Thomas G. Lanphier, Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh and others.

It was explained today that the model used in the demonstration was a much smaller machine than an actual working motor capable of developing power enough to lift and propel an airplane. Its designers claim for it that it runs on an electromagnetic principle, by which it draws its force directly from the earth's field, and through the properties within the motor itself transforms these electric currents into power that can be delivered efficiently at a propeller shaft.

Calls Demonstration Uncanny - "The demonstration was very impressive," Mr. Stout said. "It was actually uncanny. I would like very much to see how a larger model designed to develop power enough to lift an airplane would operate.

Mr. Stout said the model he saw was about the size of the tiny electric motors used in vacuum cleaners. "I was told that the revolutionary feature was a hitherto unknown manner of winding the armature." Mr. Stout continued; "Hendershot said he had succeeded in winding it in such a way that it draws energy directly from electrical currents which exist constantly in the air or in the ground. Such sources of cheap and inexhaustible power of course never have been reached before. The small model appeared to operate exactly as Hendershot explained that it did."

Neither Colonel Lindbergh nor Major Lanphier would express themselves at length on the test they witnessed yesterday. Major Lanphier admitted, however, that they were experimenting with it and referred all questions to Hendershot.

"He is the only one who knows all about it," the Major said. "Lindbergh has nothing to do with it although he saw it."

William B Mayo, chief engineer for the Ford Motor Company was in conference with Major Lanphier, Hendershot and Peat at Major Lanphier's quarters today.

Corporation Being Formed

DETROIT, Feb 25 - A corporation has been formed to develop the "free energy" motor invented by Lester J. Hendershot, Pittsburgh electrical engineer, and incorporation papers are to be filed by Henry Breckinridge, attorney, in New York it was said here today by Major Thomas G. Lanphier, Selfridge Field flight commander.

Major Lanphier who left this afternoon by air for Mitchell Field, Long Island, said before his departure that he was interested in the corporation, but he declined to name other persons interested.

Earlier in the day Major Lanphier said Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh was not connected with the enterprise, yet Mr. Breckinridge is Colonel Lindbergh's attorney.

Whether the motor will prove practical and revolutionize the automotive world will depend upon future tests, it was said today, by aeronautical experts who have viewed tests of the model.

Major Lanphier, who with Colonel Lindbergh witnessed a private demonstration yesterday said the motor had great possibilities, but "it might not amount to anything. It is too early to tell anything about it", he said.

William B. Mayo, chief engineer of the Ford Motor Company, was in conference with Major Lanphier, Hendershot and Peat in Major Lanphier's office prior to the Major's departure today. He declined to make any statement upon leaving. Major Lanphier and Colonel Lindbergh held a previous conference with Ford officials at the Ford plant on Thursday. Whether these conferences had any connection with the development of the Hendershot motor was not learned.

INVENTION RESULT OF DREAM

Hendershot Made First Fuelless Motor for His Son's Toy Plane

WEST ELIZABETH Pa., Feb. 25. - The invention of the fuelless motor, tested at Detroit was the result of a dream by its inventor Lester Jennings Hendershot who lives on "the street back of the railroad" in this town of about 3,000 inhabitants, fifteen miles from Pittsburgh.

Although Hendershot was on his way from Selfridge Field today and is not expected home until tomorrow, his wife told of his conception of the machine and of how the miniature model was constructed from the parts of a worn out radio which had been given to the inventor by his uncle.

Several years ago the vision of a machine which would operate from "earth currents" came to Hendershot in a dream, according to his wife, but it was not until last November that he actually started work on it.

His 4 year old boy had a small airplane at that time and was considerably chagrined because it would not operate. The father was disturbed too, so he told his son he would build an airplane which would work. The result of that was the fuelless machine.

First Model Worked Toy Plane - When the miniature motor model had been constructed, Hendershot built a small airplane and placed the machine in it. A switch was turned and immediately the propeller began to move. The machine was not connected to any electrical current, but was running of its own accord from "earth currents."

For several weeks the little motor and airplane rested upon a small table in the living room of the Hendershot home, which faces an unpaved street near the railroad tracks. One day D. Barr Peat of Bettisfield, the air mail port near McKeesport Pa., visited the Hendershot home to see the model. He immediately became enthusiastic and a few weeks later he and Hendershot were at Selfridge Field where permission had been granted to build a model large enough to operate an airplane.

Hendershot who is only 29 years old, was born in Hyndman Pa., His schooling has not been extensive although he spent a few months several years ago at Cornell University. where he took a few courses in mechanics. He has not been consistently employed at any particular task and has been known as a "free lance" worker. He has been a fireman, an engineer on the railroad, has worked in the mills near Pittsburgh, has inspected concrete and done electrical work. During the war he was a bugler with a machine gun company, but did not get overseas.

Still Wants to See "How They Work"

According to his mother, he has always been interested in mechanics and when a child he would insist upon taking his play things apart.

And that desire has not escaped him as a man for even now he takes his own son's playthings apart to see how they work..

It required only a few weeks for him to construct the miniature model of his fuelless motor, although he worked day and night during that time. He had a crude work bench in the cellar of his home, which was placed near the furnace, where it was warm. Early in the morning he would be there, tinkering about and late at night he still could be found there.

Hendershot's idea was that the earth currents which make the aurora borealis in the skies could be harnessed by man and made to produce power that would operate an engine.

The youthful inventor has no other inventions to his credit.

Works on Principle of Compass

PITTSBURGH Pa. Feb 25 Lester Hendershot first came to Bettis airplane field in McKeesport between two and three years ago, and soon afterward brought one of his motor models to the officers of the field for inspection.

The fuelless motor works somewhat on the principle of a compass and the original model would always operate when pointing north or south as does the compass but would not move when pointed east or west.

Young Hendershot worked nearly two years to overcome this defect and finally he brought a motor to the Bettis Field that appeared to be working perfectly. This motor was installed in a small model airplane and the plane flew, but owing to the failure to rig it property, it crashed to the ground during one of the experiments.

Constantly improving the motor Hendershot finally interested D. Barr Peat, manager of the Bettis Field, in his invention.

After a short time several capitalists were interested, and a few weeks ago the motor was taken to Detroit by Hendershot and Peat for an exhibition.

While no person at the field was in position to say authoritatively, it was stated that the capitalists who have become interested in the Hendershot motor have about completed their arrangements for the purchase of the invention and for controlling its production.

The fuelless motor, it is said, appears to have tremendous power and easily made, between 1,500 and 2,000 revolutions per minute on several occasions while being tested at the field. Pilots and mechanics believe it to be the greatest invention of the age, and all appear sure it will be a practical success as an airship motor.

It was stated at the field that the inspection of the motor by Colonel Lindbergh was made in the interests of the capitalists who are arranging to purchase the invention.

WASHINGTON INTERESTED *Army Officers Had Heard of a Revolutionary Invention*

WASHINGTON Feb 25 - Keen interest was shown in Government aviation circles today over reports from Detroit that Colonel Lindbergh and Major Lanphier had witnessed a test of an alleged fuelless motor.

Among officers who know Major Lanphier, there was a disposition to believe that the invention was important. Some recalled that recently he was reported to have intimated that he was interested in a matter that would have revolutionary results on aviation. Navy officers said it had long been recognized that some such engine might be developed.

Lieut Commander J.M. Shoemaker, head of the airplane engine department of the Navy Bureau of Aeronautics, who is a member of the subcommittee, said "the invention would be remarkable if true".

Members of the subcommittee on power plants for airplanes of the National Advisory Committee of Aeronautics were in session today, but their only information was contained in the press accounts from Detroit.

Dr. S.W. Stratton, President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who is Chairman of the subcommittee, said he could form little idea of what the engine might be but thought that as described, it would appear to be "not practical". It might be possible, he admitted, to build a magnetic engine that would work, but it probably would weight 1,000 times as much as an airplane.

Major Lanphier has long been a close friend of Colonel Lindbergh. Graduated from the Military Academy in 1914, he has been in the Army Air Corps since 1920. He has made noteworthy flights from Selfridge Field to Cuba and to Texas.

GUGGENHEIM CALLS IT INFANT *Says No Predictions Can Be Made Yet for New Motor*

SANTA BARBARA Cal. Feb 25 - Harry F. Guggenheim, President of the Guggenheim Foundation for the Advancement of Aeronautics, believes the new electro-magnetic motor tested yesterday at Selfridge Field is too infantile in its development to warrant predictions as to its effect on locomotion.

Mr Guggenheim who is spending six weeks in Santa Barbara, said today that Major Thomas G. Lanphier brought the motor to his attention several weeks ago.

"I suggest that patent rights be secured before anything further was done." Said Mr. Guggenheim, "The Guggenheim Fund will be glad to carry out investigations and experiments. But it is too early to announce the effect the new motor will have on locomotion."

Mr. Guggenheim expressed surprise that any report of the experiments had been made public, saying premature predictions that the new motor would revolutionize locomotion might retard the advancement of aeronautics.

WANTS MORE FACTS ON MOTOR *Engineers Here Are Loath to Comment on Reported Invention*

While aviation engineers and pilots here were much interested yesterday in the reports from Detroit of a fuelless motor they all wanted more information on the mysterious power plant before expressing an opinion about it.

William H. Meadowcroft, a pioneer experimenter in electricity since 1881, who has been associated with the Thomas A. Edison laboratories in East Orange, said last night that he had not heard of any experiments being carried out with an electric motor using the earth's currents directly as a source of power exclusive of generating plant and batteries. "I would like to know more about it before commenting on it," he said.

Professor Alexander Klemin, physicist of the Guggenheim School of Aeronautics at New York University, to whom the funds refers, plans and inventions having to do with aviation, said last night of the Detroit test:

"I am interested of course, but on the meager descriptions in the press, I would not care to comment. The laws of physics are pretty rigid and there is no way of getting something for nothing. Of course, we know of the magnetic field around the earth, but it is only through some chemical or atomic means that we can derive energy." Neither he nor H. Allen Sullivan of the Guggenheim Fund were inclined to take the new motor seriously until they had received a more detailed description of it.

Dr. Michael L. Pupin, Professor of Electro-Mechanics at Columbia University, told the Associated Press that he could not consider the subject seriously.

"According to my knowledge of science I cannot understand how sufficient power can be generated in this manner to operate a heavy object. I do not understand it and fail to place any importance in it he declared."

Baltimore Professor Dubious

BALTIMORE Feb 25 - The theory that the new motor tested at Detroit derived its motive power from an earth current was received skeptically today by Dr. J.B. Whitehead, Dean of the John Hopkins School of Engineering. His reaction to newspaper accounts he said, was that they were "interesting if true".

LINDY IN N.Y. TO PERFECT MAGNET MOTOR**Engine 28 Inches Long and Weighs 130 Pounds,
Designer States**

NEW YORK Feb 26 - The New York American in a copyrighted article will say tomorrow that Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh or Major Thomas Lanphier has brought to New York the electro-magnetic motor of Lester Hendershot for purposes of perfection and production.

The motor will be taken to the office of the Guggenheim Fund for the promotion of aeronautics tomorrow, the paper will say.

"Despite protestations of Lindbergh, H.K. Knight and others that they were in New York on a pleasure jaunt and that they positively would have nothing to do with production of the invention, it was learned they had brought the motor here for that sole purpose," the paper will assert.

Hendershot, designer of the engine will arrive Tuesday to continue negotiations with Lanphier, Lindbergh and the Guggenheim representatives, the paper will say.

In commenting on the invention it will say Hendershot said, "The engine actually makes its own electricity. There is a magnet which acts as a starter. From that point on it generates its own power. The magnet will not wear out under 2000 hours, nearer 3000."

"And contrary to reports already circulated, the model is not the size of a vacuum cleaner motor. It is twenty-eight inches long. It weighs 130 pounds, it has developed 45 horsepower at 1800 revolutions a minute, the average speed of internal combustion motors."