

Lobbyist Gorst gets Hendon N

He does not talk about himself, but tells me his friends attribute his success to the fact that he was born under Cancer. "I have the tenacity of a crab", he says. "I've waited and campaigned for something like 10 or 11 years to get into Parliament."

He has a tradition to live up to: his great-grandfather was Sir John Eldon Gorst, the Tory party's first manager, and then a quarter of Sir Randolph Churchill's fourth party. "He made a thorough nuisance of himself. I hope to be constructive, but if I have to I'll be a nuisance", he comments. His parliamentary causes will be competition and incentives.

Jet ahead

WHAT must be one of the most important documents in the history of aviation, a vital report written in 1935 on the invention by Sir Frank Whittle of the jet engine, is published this month for the first time by the journal of the Royal Aeronautical Society.

Its author, Mogens Louis Bramson, a consulting engineer, came down in favour of Whittle's revolutionary power plant after it had been turned down flat by the British Air Ministry.

The Secretary of State for Air had written, in 1934, that "we do not consider that we should be justified in spending any time or money on it". Scientific investigation, he explained, gave no indication that jet propulsion could be a "serious competitor to the airscrew-engine combination".

Bramson, the man who saw the immense possibilities which government scientists had missed, comments in the journal on the events leading up to his report. Whittle, a "bright, confident" flight lieutenant, came to see him with his theory. Bramson studied it for two weeks, "got quite

excited", and decided it should be done. He approached the investment bankers O. T. Falk and Company (one of whose partners was Sir Maurice Bonham Carter) who backed the project. As a result, the first Whittle jet was tested three years later at Rugby, and the first British jet aircraft flew in 1941.

Bramson now comments: "Re-reading the report after all these years, I find there are only minor points of emphasis rather than substance that would need amendment. But any temptation to feel smug about that is immediately squelched by one's immense admiration for the originator of one of the most striking and consequential technological revolutions of all time."

MY mention of Shapurji Saklatvala's tenure of North Battersea in the Communist interest between 1924 and 1929 has brought a reminder of the full history of Indian members at Westminster, Saklatvala was the first Communist M.P., but he was not the first Indian elected, even when North Battersea originally returned him as Labour member in 1922.

The first Indian M.P. was in fact a Liberal, Dadabhai Naoroji, who represented Central Finsbury between 1892 and 1895. His departure from the Commons coincided with the arrival of Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhownagree (later Sir Mancherjee), who sat for Bethnal Green North-east as a Conservative for two full terms, 1895-1906. All three men were Parsi lawyers, originally from Bombay.

Odinga fears

FEARs for the life of Oginga Odinga, detained leader of the opposition Kenya Peoples Union, are revealed in a letter, written in a mixture of Luo and English on two

Whittle backers

sheets of lavatory paper and smuggled out of Kamiti prison, near Nairobi, last week.

The letter, sent to Osumba Langi, vice-president of the Kenya Students Association in London, accuses a man who was recently detained at Kamiti of being a government spy. It says that his mission is to murder Odinga, apparently no longer in the notorious Hola but on his own at Langata, a detention centre five miles south of Nairobi. The note, written by a close associate, names the alleged spy and says he comes from Gem, a K.P.U. stronghold.

"This man is very dangerous", the letter continues. "He is a fake detainee aimed at finding some information from us, but he is specifically detained for the purpose of harming some of us, particularly Odiero (Odinga's code name).

"Through talks we find that this assignment must be completed by March 31. He says that Odiero must submit to Kenyatta by then or else his life is in danger. He tells some people that he would not care about doing it because the Government has promised him a big reward. He says he is soon being transferred to where Odiero is."

All found

THERE is rejoicing at London Transport, which appears to have been relieved of the irksome task of finding any of the capital necessary to build new Tube lines.

Already new lines approved by the Ministry of Transport rank for a 75 per cent "infrastructure" grant; now the G.L.C. has quietly indicated that it will consider putting up the remaining 25 per cent.

In a significant—but largely unremarked—passage in a joint report to the council, its Policy Steering and Finance committees said of current work on the Victoria Line extension to Brixton: