



PLACE IN THE SUN: Clear of a dense cloud bank, the prototype Viscount (which is now in possession of a Normal Category C. of A.), ascends to its cruising level. News of recent developments in connection with this notable turboprop airliner appears on pages 443-444.

REACTION

SUFFICIENT time has now elapsed since the S.B.A.C. Show to allow a fair assessment of world (and particularly) American reaction to the British industry's timely presentation of its well-developed gas-turbine airliners.

Some of the trans-Atlantic admissions are illuminating, if only because they *are* admissions; it would seem that a search for excuses appeared too formidable a task. Leading American aviation journals are brutally frank about what *Aviation Week* calls "the three-year lead which the British have gained while we have marked time to ponder the economic efficiency of jets, and which may lose for America her predominance in civil air transport." Senator Edwin Johnson, of the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee is reported by the same journal to have been informed that several U.S. airline presidents have arranged to purchase British jet aircraft during the next three years. A timely coincidence was last week's announcement (enlarged upon on pp. 445) of a C. of A. for the Vickers Viscount, followed by news of the devaluation of the pound sterling. This conjunction should increase considerably the Viscount's chances on the American market, where airline operators are faced with the increasingly urgent problem of replacing their ageing DC-3s and DC-4s.

Another prominent weekly, *American Aviation*, would appear to be attempting to hide its own misgivings under a mantle of criticism of the British method of aircraft procurement, which, it claims, "possesses neither virility nor the discipline of state control." Our industry is accused of being slow and old-fashioned, of failing to anticipate useful designs and adopt modern ideas and, above all, to be lacking in efficient civil power units. Though there may be a grain of truth in accusations of our having, like the French, too many prototypes and not enough established types in full production, the general theme of the argument strikes a very odd note in the face of recent developments. Apart from pure-jet progress, of course, there are the encouraging possibilities of prolonging the life of the DC-3 by the installation of Mamba turboprops—a life over which the 1952 I.C.A.O. requirements are casting the shadow of obsolescence. Mention of the recently extended overhaul period of the Bristol Hercules to 700 hours, and the excellent service it is giving in the Vikings, would also appear to confound the accuracy of the same critic's accusation that Britain is lacking efficient civil power plants.

Our contributor "Favonius" in this week's "American Notebook" (pp. 436-439) quotes Mr. W. E. Beall, Boeing's vice-president of engineering and sales, as having said: "As things stand at the moment, it may well be that the U.S.A. will lose not only world markets to the British jets, but, because of competition, may be forced into buying British for lack of such types in our own country."

Such comments, and others that have been made, give some measure of the sensation—the term is not too strong—which Farnborough's revelations have caused across the Atlantic. More than once during the past week we have heard the view expressed that British aircraft manufacturers would be well advised to follow up their advantage by catering specifically for potential American markets in their immediate design and production plans. Certainly it seems that we have, by our "slow and old-fashioned methods," stumbled upon a possible means of winning some much-needed dollars.

TRANSATLANTIC FARES

AS a result of the sterling devaluation, airline fares for transatlantic travel from Britain are to be increased by 44 per cent with effect from October 1st, but those to Continental and other non-dollar destinations will not be affected. This will mean an increase of £38 8s in the single fare from Britain to the U.S.A. Fares to South America are affected in that the portion from Dakar to Rio de Janeiro will be adjusted to correspond to the decreased value of the pound.

Sir William Hildred, director-general of I.A.T.A., disclosed on September 22nd that this decision was taken at an emergency meeting by representatives of 32 countries, but said also that the situation will be subject to review at the next meeting of I.A.T.A. at Mexico City in November. Both Switzerland and Czechoslovakia have reserved their decisions for further investigation. American companies operating point-to-point routes in non-dollar areas are likely to suffer a considerable loss of revenue in the interim period until a new policy is adopted.

AERODROME OWNERS ASSOCIATE

MORE than fifty members and guests of the Aerodrome Owners' Association last week travelled to Manchester for the Association's second post-war summer conference.

The proceedings were opened formally at Ringway Airport on September 21st by the Lord Mayor of Manchester, Alderman Robert Moss, J.P., and his remarks on the air-mindedness of Mancunians were given emphasis shortly afterwards by the announcement of a new £1,000,000 development plan for Ringway. The present 06-24 main runway is to be strengthened and lengthened to nearly 2,000 yards to cater for the new generation of airliners now envisaged for B.E.A. and other European lines, and a new S.E.-N.W. runway is to be built to supersede the present 02-20 and 10-28 ones. In addition, the parking apron is to be greatly extended. These improvements, together with the attractive new passenger buildings, should make Ringway one of the finest provincial airports in Europe.

The tour of the airport which followed included a visit to