

CIVIL AVIATION

AN AUSTRALIAN ACHIEVEMENT

IN a statement outlining the Viscount's progress in service with Trans-Australia Airlines, Vickers-Armstrongs report that the 50,000th Australian Viscount passenger was carried on April 10th. "This," say Vickers, "is a remarkable achievement when it is recalled that T.A.A. started Viscount services as recently as December 18th last and had only two aircraft in use until January 1st, when a third Viscount was scheduled. A fourth aircraft came into service on February 1st."

An average fleet of 3½ T.A.A. Viscounts thus carried 50,000 passengers in 113 days. Their load passenger factor has averaged 85.2 per cent, and daily utilization has averaged 7.8 hr per aircraft; individual aircraft have, on occasions, logged 11 hr in a day. Between March 17th and March 30th all the four Viscounts in use were fully serviceable each day.

The strength of T.A.A.'s Viscount fleet was recently increased from four aircraft to five, and a sixth will follow later this year. Routes operated include Sydney - Brisbane, Sydney - Melbourne and Melbourne - Adelaide - Perth.

Vickers calculate that the total distance now flown daily by Viscounts in Europe, Australia and Canada is equivalent to more than twice round the world.

RINGWAY AGREEMENT CONCLUDED

TO mark the conclusion of protracted negotiations between Manchester Corporation and the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, a luncheon was held at Manchester Town Hall on Friday, April 22nd. An agreement between the two parties provides that Manchester will continue to own and operate Ringway Airport, but that the M.T.C.A. will provide technical services and contribute to future development costs.

It was planned that the appropriate documents would be handed over to Councillor L. W. Biggs, chairman of the airport committee, but the Minister, the Rt. Hon. J. A. Boyd-Carpenter, was prevented at the last moment from attending. He had arranged, however, to produce the documents on Saturday at Ringway Airport at noon; meanwhile he was represented by Mr. G. I. Morris, his under-secretary for ground services.

All this was explained at the luncheon by the Lord Mayor, Aid. J. S. Harper, who called upon Councillor Biggs to propose the main toast, "The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation."

In the proposal, Mr. Biggs pointed out that the fusion of interests of Municipality and State in the future development of Ringway Airport provided a possible pattern for other airports. Manchester, as the first city with a licensed airport, had been loath to part with its interests and the present arrangement in which finance and development were to be shared was the result of long but co-operative dealings with the Ministry. Further developments would be an extension (from 5,900 to 7,000ft) of the main runway, and terminal buildings of the most modern kind; three-quarters of the development cost would be borne by the Government. The approximate cost of Government "effects," including hangars, handed over to Manchester is quoted as £250,000.

LOGGING TIME WITH Q.E.A.

SOME impressive utilization figures with their Super Constellations have been reported by Qantas Empire Airways. It is stated that an average of 10 hours' revenue flying daily was achieved on the company's trans-Pacific route during the peak period of 1954, only a few weeks after the aircraft had entered service. Carrying payloads of 15-20,000 lb, the L.1049s have on most occasions been over-flying Canton Island, thus covering the 3,190 miles between Honolulu and Fiji in a single hop. Delivery of the Qantas Super Constellations began in May 1954 and the fleet now totals ten. By the first week in February 1955 they had made 151 trans-Pacific crossings and 45 flights between Sydney and London, carrying 12,250 passengers and flying 6,850 hours. Average daily utilization of the fleet over the whole route system is 8 to 8½ hours.

ATLANTIC AIR-DROP

DAKOTA G-AMSU, operated by Dan-Air Services, Ltd., recently took the leading part in what is believed to be the first operation of its kind—an emergency air-drop of spare parts to a ship in the Atlantic. The spares—pistons and rings of 11in diameter—were required by the S.S. *Capetan Ilias*, disabled and drifting some 200 n.m. W.S.W. of Fastnet.

Commanded by Capt. Watson, the Dakota left Blackbushe Airport in the early hours of April 13th for Shannon, where it was refuelled. The met. office at Shannon reported poor visibility and low cloud in the area of the ship, and take-off from Shannon was therefore delayed until contact with the ship could be made

through Valencia marine radio station, and a weather actual obtained.

The aircraft left Shannon at 0930 hr and made immediate visual contact with the ship some two hours later. As the aircraft approached and Capt. Watson circled the ship to make positive identification, a dinghy was seen pulling away to a position some 100 yd from the ship. After one dummy run Capt. Watson flew at reduced airspeed past the dinghy with wheels and flaps lowered, and dropped the package at low level some 50 yd from the dinghy. Consisting of a sealed drum containing the spare parts, with an outer protective padding of cork, the package was pushed out by a crew member through the passenger entrance, the door of which had been removed before take-off. As the aircraft left the area the master of the ship signalled that the spares were safely on board and undamaged.

The brokers responsible for arranging the charter were E. A. Gibson and Co., Ltd., of London.

PAKISTAN MERGER

THE amalgamation of Pakistan International Airlines with Orient Airlines to form the Pakistan International Airlines Corporation became effective on April 1st, 1955. The Pakistan Government has a controlling interest in the new corporation, whose principal officials are Mr. Mirza Ahmad Ispahani, chairman of the board of directors and Mr. F. M. McGregor, general manager. Henceforth all services, domestic and international, will be operated under the banner of P.I.A.

BUSHMASTER, ALIAS TRIMOTOR

A 1955 version of the Ford Trimotor, first certificated in 1926, is soon to take the air. A Californian company, Hayden Aircraft Corp., have slightly redesigned the old aircraft and plan to build it with the simplest possible factory tooling, and to fit it only with such equipment as will be required for V.F.R. flight in undeveloped regions.

Some alterations have been made to the original design, particularly in cockpit layout. Flaps have been added and the fuselage has been widened by 18in, the floor strengthened, control cables re-routed and slight improvements made to the vertical tail surfaces. It is also intended to fit lighter and more powerful engines than the original Trimotor carried, and to house these in cowlings giving better temperature control. It is reported that the new engines may be Pratt and Whitney R-985s.

Some of the estimated figures for the new aircraft, which will be called the Stout Bushmaster, are: all-up weight 12,500 lb, payload 5,000 lb, and range 525 m. The cruising speed is to be 125 m.p.h. and the stalling speed a mere 40 m.p.h. Some 30 of the original Trimotors are still flying in America.

RECRUITMENT OF AIRLINE PILOTS

IN the April issue of its journal *The Log*, the British Air Line Pilots Association comments critically on the recent findings of the joint Air Ministry/M.T.C.A. committee appointed to investigate the supply of pilots for civil aviation. It may be recalled (*Flight*, March 11th, page 293) that the committee's main conclusions were: (1) the R.A.F. would continue to provide an adequate field of civil-aviation recruitment for pilots for "at least the next seven or eight years," (2) "the age-spread, experience and technical background" of ex-R.A.F. pilots should be acceptable to civil aviation, (3) the setting-up of an independent civil-aviation flying training scheme supported from public funds was therefore not justified, and (4) the whole question of future recruitment should be reviewed after four years.

These conclusions were referred to by Mr. Profumo, Parliamentary Secretary to the M.T.C.A., in the course of a Commons debate on February 25th, when the House discussed the scheme, suggested by the Air League, for the training of commercial pilots.

B.A.L.P.A.'s criticisms, with which *Flight* is largely in agreement, include the following:—

"The main conclusion that the R.A.F. could continue to provide for a field of recruitment adequate to meet the needs of civil aviation was based largely on a canvass of some 500 R.A.F. pilots due to leave the service within a period of two years from the date of the announcement. Mr. Profumo, however, had to make an important reservation in respect of the conclusion, which reservation is typical of what has happened previously in relation to this subject. Briefly, it was that, due to the change in R.A.F. policy announced within a day or two of the debate, the Ministry was not certain how far the main conclusion was a correct one.

"This illustrates the point that this Association has made on practically every occasion it has raised the subject in the past, namely, that it is impossible for civil operators to plan ahead on the basis of Air Ministry policy and prognostications. . . . The report may well be rendered valueless by that change in policy and there is no guarantee that any future report presented in the same way may not suffer the same fate.

"We are not impressed by the composition of the committee set up by