



# Straight and Level



## MINISTRY OF PLANES

### Oral Answers

**Wg Cdr J. Reheat** (Savoy Grill South) asked the Minister whether he had yet made a decision on the Scruggs Variable-Cost Wonderplane.

**Mr John Stonehenge-Doghouse** My department has decided—and who am I to disagree?—that the Wonderplane should go ahead on a 50-50 basis with the French. Our French colleagues have been very generous and will assume technical and managerial leadership, while we will be in charge of writing the manual on how to bleed the hydraulic system.

**Wg Cdr Reheat** How much will the Wonderplane programme cost?

**Mr Doghouse** Preliminary departmental estimates, which are of course subject to review, and are the responsibility of a committee of officials . . .

**Hon Members** Answer!

**Mr Doghouse** Several hundred million pounds.

*Several hon Members rose—*

**Mr Doghouse** Okay, about twice that.

*Several hundred hon Members rose—*

**Mr Speaker** Order. Time is getting on. We must not presume to trespass upon the responsibilities and authority of the Civil Service and the Executive.

● Lord Caldecote, engineer and manager, says: "It is a commonplace view that stockbrokers have country houses; but I do not think many people believe that engineers have country houses. What are we going to do about it?"

Stockbrokers have yachts and chauffeurs and flats in town and are held in great awe and respect by the Government and must never be offended, oh dear no, and they get nearly as many knighthoods as the kneddies and they start at 11 o'clock and knock off at 3. What are we going to do about it? Be a stockbroker, mate.



Just how low can you get?—No 22

A boat-dropping de Havilland Caribou

—A special prize of a B.O.A.C. Comet 4 goes to A. Crichton, 7 Holmswood Avenue, Blantyre, Glasgow.

From "Hotspur," January 14, 1967

● The purpose of the Air Transport Licensing Board, as everyone knows, is to further the development of British Rail. This must be why the Board says, in its remarkable decision on Teesside services, that it is inclined to refuse licences for new domestic air services in favour of British Rail.

I do not wish to be more beastly about the ATLB than is absolutely necessary, which means being fairly beastly, but I calculate—and I have the calculations right here—that if the British Rail fare on the newly electrified London-Liverpool route were based on the total cost of that route, the fare would be £12 13s 6d—single.

Coupled with the existing Speke-Knightsbridge time of 80 minutes by One-Eleven, the airlines could advertise "Half the time, half the price."

● Some of the Viet Cong guerillas in South Vietnam are not entirely *au fait* with aeroplanes. An RAAF de Havilland Caribou pilot landed at a Viet Cong-surrounded airstrip recently, looked out from his stationary aircraft and was horrified to find himself looking straight down the barrel of a Viet Cong gun on the jungle fringes of the strip. This is it, the pilot thought; but the Viet Cong gunner, remembering all he had been taught about lead-off when aiming at aircraft, carefully swung his gun around—one length, two lengths, and fired his shot harmlessly well in front of the Caribou.

By the time he might have re-loaded, the Caribou had STOLed away. Cross my heart.

### LETTERS

*Scruggs House*

Sir,—There are two mentions of de Havilland in your column this week. Will you please not print the name de Havilland again. It gets on my nerves.

J. BLACKOUT-JONES.

[de Havilland, de Havilland, de Havilland, de Havilland, de Havilland, de Havilland, de Havilland, de Havilland—RB.]

● I liked the story in *The Times* about the regular air traveller who collects those flight progress cards that are passed down the cabin. During, say, a domestic flight he takes special delight in passing on a London - New York card. The consternation this causes is often quite memorable.

ROGER BACON



Wings and Water—No 7 Siemens-engined Klemm at the Deutschland Flug, Berlin, 1933