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V/STOt SURVEY

World's Biggest VTOL Carrier

By NEIL HARRISON

Bristow Helicopters Ltd, who from small beginnings 16 years ago have grown to be operators of 100 helicopters, have lost none of the small-team spirit so often vital to healthy growth. Still in overall command is Mr Alan Bristow (left), chairman, with Mr George Russell (right) his close associate from the earliest days, as managing director. Below: Part of the Westland Wessex 60 fleet, at the Great Yarmouth base, about to begin a day's flying to and from the North Sea oil rigs

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" » m JTE STILL HAVEN'T EVEN BEGUN to scratch the surface

^*^ # of the market for commercial helicopters." said ™ Mr Alan Bristow, chairman of Bristow Helicopters, during a celebration party at London's Battersea Heliport on April 16 after taking delivery of his company's 100th rotary-winged aircraft (a Westland Wessex 60).
During the last year, he said, the company made a profit of £600,000 on a turnover of £4.5 million, and 61 per cent of this was in overseas currencies; he estimated a profit for this year of £700,000 on receipts of £5.5 million—with an even higher percentage of foreign business.
Part of the immediate increase in output will come from the introduction this year of no fewer than 30 new helicopters (including two Wessex 60s. 18 Bell 47G-4s and seven Jet Rangers), and these deliveries will increase the value of the fleet from some £4.5 million today to over £5.7 million. On many counts Bristow Helicopters are already the biggest rotary-winged-aircraft operators in the world (except for Aero-flot, of course) but by the end of this year it should be safe to say that they are biggest, bar none, on any count.
A substantial part of Bristow's work now and in the imme-diate future is in connection with service support of oil and gas rigs throughout the world (the 100th aircraft will join six other Wessex 60s, based at Great Yarmouth, on rig services over the North Sea). But the emphasis will change, I was told by the managing director, Mr George Russell Fry. "J am sure," he said, "that we shall be taking delivery of our 250th helicopter within three years." Of the additional 150 he thought 50 or so might be used in connection with rigs and the rest in new spheres of activity.
Areas where Bristows see big opportunities include air taxi (the all-weather light-twin Westland-Sud WG-13 is a key vehicle in this respect) and in service support of various kinds for large merchant ships and tankers at sea. Mr Fry sees a place for the large crane^type helicopter, such as the Sikorsky S-64. for lighterage duties where it is too costly or imprac-ticable to build sufficiently large port facilities for the very large ships coming into use. The WG-13, too, is seen to have great potential for ship-to-shore communications: in a related

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