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New management for M45H
Responsibility for the Rolls-Royce/
Snecma M45H now rests jointly with
the French company and Rolls-Royce
(1971) Ltd. A new contract, signed
recently, at long last transfers the powerplant from the old liquidated Rolls-Royce company (of which Snecma is a creditor) into the fold of the new one. The agreement between Rolls-Royce (1971) and Snecma to continue joint development of the M45H follows the decision last month by the VFW-Fokker board to authorise production of the VFW 614. Rolls-Royce (1971) now becomes the prime contractor for the engine to VFW. Development of the unit was begun in 1966 and was continued by the receiver after the liquidation. The full flight envelope has been explored with the 614, and the M45H has accumulated about 470hr of running in the prototypes. Some 3,000hr of bench running has been completed and the production engine has been defined. Data obtained from the 19 M45Hs now running gives Rolls-Royce confidence that production engines will meet thrust and specific fuel consumption guarantees at "reasonable turbine-entry tempera-tures." Rolls-Royce (1971) and Snecma are studying applications of the engine, which is now undergoing bird-ingestion tests.

Charter hearing dropped
A hearing of applications by eight British airlines for the new "Class 2" licences (for advance-booking charters) has been cancelled by the Civil Aviation Authority after it managed to persuade BOAC and British Cale-donian to withdraw their objections against the others. The objections were to have related to the need for price and capacity control for the charters, which the CAA proposes to do without. BCAL has replaced its objection with a representation on the

same subject, thus allowing a decision to be made without a hearing.
The cancelled proceedings were to have been filmed by the BBC for a programme on airline economics to-morrow. Another CAA hearing was filmed instead, the first time that this has been done.

SSTs under fire
The Congressional Sub-committee on Priorities and Economy in Govern-ment, which is chaired by Sen William Proxmire (Dem, Wisconsin), began hearings on December 27 to assess re-ports that, despite assurances to the contrary, the Federal Government is considering some type of assistance for an American SST. While there have been suggestions of alternative methods of financing advanced tech-nology, it is possible that the Nixon Administration might consider some expansion of the Nasa-sponsored re-search already being carried out by in-dustry. Plans for a significant increase in finance, however, could face the possibility of a second Congressional veto.

Secor Browne, chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board; Robert Cannon, Assistant Transportation Secretary; and Frampton Ellis, the director of supersonic transport for the FAA, accepted invitations to appear before the committee. When these officials failed to appear the Senator for Wis-consin, who played a prominent role in the battle which led to money being cut off from the Boeing SST in March 1971, observed: "To accept the com-mittee's invitation and then to renege on the invitation can only leave the committee and public to speculate about what revival plans the Adminis-tration may have in mind."
Professor Milton Friedman, the monetary theorist from the University of Chicago, in a written statement opposed Government support for the SST. It would be "a step towards

socialism and away from free enter-prise," and he said an SST should be built only "if private enterprise finds it profitable to do so after paying all costs."

Although Sen Proxmire told the hearing that he hoped the United States would eventually develop an SST, the committee appeared to adopt a hostile attitude towards SSTs in general, and the economics of the Con-corde came under study.
Dr Bo Lundberg, who was director-general of the Aeronautical Research Institute of Sweden between 1948 and 1968, was invited to appear before the committee. He expanded on the argu-ments he outlined in Flight, December
28. In his opinion it is not possible to design an SST which is economically competitive with contemporary sub-sonic aircraft. He told the committee that, while Concorde is technically marvellous, "There is no point in tech-nological marvels if they do not make commercial and social sense."
• Concorde 001 is due to fly from Toulouse to Ellinikon International Airport, Athens, on January 4 to carry out a series of test flights to check performance following modifications to the undercarriage. Four take-offs are planned and demonstrations will be given to Olympic Airways. The air-craft will also carry out a series of ex-periments in the upper atmosphere.

More Strikemasters for Saudi
The Royal Saudi Arabian Air Force has ordered a second batch of British Aircraft Corporation Strike-masters. Although the number is not disclosed, Flight understands it to be about a dozen, which would bring the number of the type operated by the country to 33. In addition, the Strike-masters already in service are to be re-fitted with improved avionics and navigation systems, and armament facilities allowing a wider range of weapons.
The order brings the total number of Jet Provosts and Strikemasters sold to more than 700. Nine air forces have bought more than 100 Strikemasters, the export value of which is about £40 million. BAC says that negotia-tions for more aircraft continue with several Strikemaster operators.

French workers in London
A delegation of French aerospace trade union officials (CGC and FO) visited the United Kingdom just before Christmas to meet the British Government, aerospace industry

The first production prototype Corvette flew
at St Nazaire on December 20. Test pilot for the flight, which was curtailed to 40min by bad weather, was Robert Briot