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WORLD NEWS

setting up of TsAGI—the Soviet Cen-
tral Hydro-aerodynamical Research
Institute—went over to the aircraft
design side of the Institute.
During the 50 years of the Tupolev design bureau, the designs have pro-gressed from the single seater ANT-1 to the first Soviet all-metal aircraft, the ANT-2 of 1924, and on to the TU-144 SST and the current super-sonic bomber designs. In the years between there were such types as the ANT-4 (TB-1) with its engines mounted in the wings, the great ANT-20 ("Maxim Gorki") and many varied types embracing all military require-ments—fighters, bombers, ground-attack aircraft and flying boats, as well as transports.
Even from one or two short meetings with this remarkable man it was not difficult to realise that here was one of the great characters which world aviation produces—great, yet humble, people who have shared the path so well-phrased in the RAF's "Per ardua ad astra." The phrase would not be an inappropriate tribute to the life work of A. N. Tupolev.

First wide-body loss
A Lockheed TriStar of Eastern Air Lines crashed in the Everglade swamp 17 miles west of Miami International Airport on December 29. The aircraft was operating a scheduled flight from New York and had overshot from its first approach so that the crew could investigate a nosewheel-unlocked in-

Westminster

In the House of Lords on December 13 LORD ORR-EWING asked the Govern-

ment how many quality-assurance personnel were employed by the Ministry of Defence in each of the last five years. Lord Carrington, Sec-retary of State for Defence, gave the figures from 1968 as 16,150, 15,350, 14,900, 14,350 and 13,780-. Lord Orr-Ewing asked whether, as money spent on hardware for the three Services during the past four years had been cut by 33 per cent, the number of quality assurance officers ought not to have been cut by a similar percen-tage. Lord Carrington replied that further considerable reductions of staff were expected in the near future. One of the ways in which staff were being reduced and in which the Government would in future get a considerable reduction was to place increased responsibility for quality assurance on contractors.

dication, which is thought to have been spurious.
Casualty figures were still uncer-tain at the time of going to press, partly because the marshy ground had complicated rescue operations and partly because, in addition to fare-paying passengers, there were a num-ber of Eastern Air Lines employees on board. It was thought that the air-craft was carrying a crew of 13 and 164 passengers and that, of the total of 177 on board, 79 had survived. The aircraft was delivered to Eastern on August 18, 1972, and had flown for 978hr. The hull insurance is valued at $20 million and the risk is shared among several markets, including Lloyd's, who anticipate that the acci-dent will lead to the largest claim ever to result from an aircraft accident.
The flight-data recorder and the cockpit voice recorder have been re-covered and are at present being analysed at the National Transport-ation Safety Board headquarters in Washington. The Board has announced that a public inquiry into the accident will begin in approximately six weeks' time.
While no cause for the accident has been advanced by either the airline or the NTSB, eye-witness reports and the condition of the wreckage indicate that the aircraft struck the ground in a flat attitude with the undercarriage lowered. The chief pilot of Eastern Air Lines issued the following notice to the carrier's flying staff on Decem-ber 31: "At the present time there is

On December 19 SIR STEPHEN MCADDEN

(Con, Southend E) asked the Secre-tary of State for the Environment whether he had reached a decision on the mode to be adopted for the Lon-don-Maplin high-speed link. Mr Pey-ton, Minister for Transport Industries, replied that the Government had de-cided that the link to Maplin should initially be a conventional rail track terminating at King's Cross. This could offer a service running initially at up to 125 m.p.h. with the possibility of 150 m.p.h. or even higher speeds later. The Government intended to examine the possibilities of introduc-ing new systems at a later stage, and the Minister had therefore set in hand an urgent study including the organi-sation needed for constructing and controlling the link, the choice of traction and vehicles for it, the practi-cability and cost of keeping options open for the introduction of more advanced systems, and the contribu-tion that British industry could make to the techniques and types of vehicle for passenger and baggage handling, both on the link and in the new air-port. The work would be carried out, in consultation with the Minister for Aerospace, by a small group, including both British Rail and the British Air-ports Authority, under the chairman-ship of the Under-Secretary of State who has responsibilities for Maplin.

absolutely no evidence to indicate that any airframe, engine or system mal-function existed prior to impact. A full-scale investigation is continuing and currently there is no reason to consider grounding the aircraft."
• A DC-9, N954N, of North Central Airlines struck a Delta Air Lines Con-vair 880, N8807E, while taking off from Chicago O'Hare on December 20, 1972. After striking the Convair the DC-9 crashed and caught fire, killing nine passengers.
• A Fokker F.28 of Braathens SAFE,
LN-SUY, crashed on December 23 while on a scheduled flight from Aalesund to Oslo. The aircraft carried a crew of three and 42 passengers; 40 people were killed.
• A Twin Otter of Air Guadeloupe, on
charter to Air France, crashed into the sea while approaching St Martin on December 24. The pilot and 11 passengers were killed.
• A DC-7 belonging to Air Interstate
of Miami crashed shortly after take-off from Puerto Rico on December
31. The five crew members are missing, presumed killed.
© A Fokker F.28, EC-BVC, of Iberia was severely damaged and the four crew members were injured when the aircraft left the runway at Bilbao on landing from a scheduled freight flight from Madrid on December 28.
• Sixteen survivors have been found alive after surviving for over two months in the Andes after their Uruguayan military Fairchild F-27 crashed on October 13, 1972, while en route to Santiago.

SIR RONALD RUSSELL (Con, Wembley South) asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on December 21 how many aircraft had been allowed to land at night at Heathrow during the summer and winter periods of 1972. Mr Cranley Onslow, Under-Secretary, Aerospace, said that, based on a night period of 2330hr-0600hr local time, the total for the winter period (January, February, March, November, December up to 17th) was 2,502; for the summer period (the re-maining seven months) the total was 5,245. The figures related to landings of all kinds of aircraft, jet and non-jet. There were no restrictions on the number of aircraft landing at Heath-
row.

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On December 22 MR FRANK JUDD (Lab, Portsmouth West) asked the Minister of State for Defence whether, in the light of the observation by the Select Committee on Expenditure, he would issue a statement on the future of Seawolf. Mr Antony Buck replied that the recommendations and conclusions of the Expenditure Committee were now being considered and it would be wrong for him to comment on them at this stage. Meanwhile, the technical development of Seawolf was progres-sing satisfactorily.