

CIVIL AVIATION NEWS



FORERUNNER. The Hermes Mark II which will be flown exclusively for testing purposes.

M.C.A. Traffic Scheme Ready for Operation : Air Transport Meeting in S. Africa : America Decides Against Chosen Instrument

HERMES II—FIRST FLIGHT

AT Radlett, on August 2nd, the prototype Handley Page Hermes flew for the first time, and test flying continued during the remainder of last week. It is understood that the aircraft behaved well and showed every indication of being a very promising civil transport. This aircraft, which is known as the Mark II, will be the only one of its kind and is a prototype for the Hermes Marks IV and V. It will be extensively tested in the air, and pressurization, air-conditioning and sound-proofing of the fuselage will each be the subject of special tests. Whereas the Mark II has a tail-wheel undercarriage, the Marks IV and V are designed with a nose-wheel. They will be 60in longer in the fuselage forward of the wings and 100in aft of the wings. The standard production model will also be equipped with a scanner in the nose for search radar. Handley Page are expecting to make first deliveries of the Mark IV to B.O.A.C. by the middle of next summer, and by the beginning of 1949 they hope to be producing at the rate of four each month. Twelve Mark IV Hermes have been ordered for the Empire routes.

TRAFFIC CONTROL SCHEME

OWING to manning difficulties the Ministry of Civil Aviation are still unable to put into effect an air traffic control scheme for the United Kingdom. In the March 20th issue of *Flight* a plan for a provisional scheme was outlined. This scheme has now been approved and regulations have been printed in a Notice to Airmen with October 1st as the effective date. The Ministry, however, are unable to bring the scheme into operation until man-power is made available by the Ministry of Labour. Control will affect only scheduled aircraft flying in Instrument Flight Rule conditions, and all other aircraft are still allowed to fly according to Visual Flight Rule conditions. Flight Information Regions have been formed to cover the whole of the United Kingdom, and in the south-east and south-west of England there are two Control Areas in which more strict control will be attempted. Aircraft without radar aids will not be permitted to fly in the controlled areas when Instrument Flight Rule conditions are in force. The Ministry possesses no mandatory power for enforcing the regulations, but legislation will eventually grant such powers and enable action to be taken against offenders. When eventually the scheme is put into operation there will be little more actual control than at present, but the air traffic control organization should have more precise information of the movement of aircraft. As well as safeguarding the movement of passenger

aircraft in the air it will make all users conscious of control, so that as radar aids develop and lightweight radio sets become available, complete control will be more easily introduced and all users, including scheduled line, charter companies, private owners and the Services will have had useful experience.

This attempt by the Ministry of Civil Aviation to create some order in the air is by no means premature and is in accordance with I.A.C.O. requirements. Holland already has a similar scheme in operation, and France, Portugal and Belgium are developing air traffic control on the area system.

SOUTH AFRICAN AIR TRANSPORT COUNCIL

ON August 18th and 19th the South African Air Transport Council met at Victoria Falls. Representatives of South Africa, N. and S. Rhodesia, Nyasaland and East Africa territories, and members of all the Government air lines concerned, B.O.A.C., South African Airways, Central African Airways and East African Airways, were there. The chairman was Colonel Sir Ernest Guest, Minister for Defence and Air, Southern Rhodesia, and the British delegation was led by Sir Frederick Bowhill.

There was a significant tendency in the discussions to safeguard the interests of the various governments' "chosen instruments," and it was decided that the applications received from some European countries to fly over South African territories would have to wait until more concrete proposals were made. It was decided to recommend that all non-scheduled operators should be more strictly licensed and controlled than they were at present. By the end of September all the member countries of the Council will be required to make a survey of existing equipment and make recommendations for the future needs of air transport.

It was decided to provide three air-traffic control centres at Nairobi, Salisbury and Johannesburg. It was also decided to adopt the quadrantal height system of separation for aircraft and to create a new communications system to advise operators at short notice on the state of airfields and services. Salisbury (Southern Rhodesia) is to be responsible for investigating accidents in that country, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, but Pretoria will be responsible for South Africa, Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda and Zanzibar.

It is understood that the British delegation saw the latest developments at the B.O.A.C. flying-boat base at Victoria Falls. The main alighting place is a stretch of water 500 yds wide and 2,500 yds long on the Zambesi about three miles