



The first photograph to be taken of the A.W. Apollo in the air. Powered with four Mamba turboprops, it is designed to cruise at 305 m.p.h. at 20,000ft.

## Apollo Airborne

*Armstrong Whitworth's Mamba-powered Airliner Makes a Successful Initial Flight*

**S**LOWLY (as it may seem to those of us who are anxious to fly British on all occasions), but nevertheless surely, the plans of the Brabazon Committee are reaching fruition. On Sunday, April 10th, the first Apollo—built under Ministry of Supply contract by Sir W. G. Armstrong Whitworth Aircraft, Ltd., to the Brabazon 11B

specification—made a completely satisfactory initial flight.

At the controls were A.W.A. test pilots E. G. Franklin and W. H. Else. They took the prototype Apollo (which has Armstrong Siddeley Mamba 2 turboprops) into the air for approximately 30 minutes, during which time they climbed to 6,000 ft and obtained sufficient impressions of general handling qualities to give a satisfactory report. The weight on take-off was 29,000 lb (normal all-up weight is 37,000 lb and maximum weight 39,500 lb), and the two pilots were the only occupants.

Two Apollo prototypes are ordered, the second of which is to be fully furnished and equipped. Apart from being turbine-powered (Britain now has two makes of turboprop civil transports flying), this medium-range aircraft is pressurized up to a differential of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  lb/sq in, and has other modern features, including reversible-pitch three-bladed de Havilland airscrews 10 ft in diameter.

A projected variant of the Apollo with longer fuselage and an estimated payload of 10,000 lb (2,500 lb increase) has been studied. It would have accommodation for a maximum of 45 passengers in place of the present layouts for 24 or 31. Civil or military freighter, ambulance and personal versions of the Apollo have also been planned.

The second Apollo is now out of its jigs and at the final assembly stage, while the first prototype is at present undergoing intensive inspection and is not expected to fly again until this work has been completed.

The particular version of the Mamba 2, four of which are installed in the first Apollo, develops a maximum of 1,010 s.h.p. plus 307 lb static thrust. The Apollo power unit complete was illustrated in the April 7th issue of *Flight*, and the turboprop itself was described in the issue of March 18th last year. So far as the Apollo aircraft is concerned, a cut-away drawing and full constructional details appeared in *Flight* of August 26th last year.

It is, perhaps, noteworthy that this important first flight was made from an airfield—Baginton, Coventry—which is grass-covered and has no runways.



Mr. E. G. Franklin (centre), the test pilot on the maiden flight, gives his first impressions to Armstrong Whitworth engineers after landing. Mr. W. H. Else is seen directly behind him.