

FROM ALL QUARTERS

PROGRESS AT WOOMERA

WELCOME news of progress was given last week by Air Chief Marshal Sir Alec Coryton, Chief Executive, Guided Weapons, Ministry of Supply. He has recently returned from visits to the Woomera rocket range in Australia and its controlling establishment at Salisbury, and to America to see similar work there. In relation to the expense and effort devoted to guided missiles, said Sir Alec, progress had been satisfactory.

Woomera range, some 350 miles north of Adelaide, is capable of almost unlimited extension, first for 1,200 miles over land then over the ocean. Large and small rockets have already been fired and, as readers will know, a small Australian pilotless type of aircraft is now being test-flown—at present with a pilot. What Sir Alec referred to as "test vehicles" were being developed to carry and test in full scale the component units—propulsion, control, electronic and the V.T. proximity fuses, of future missiles. Through a subsidiary company in Australia—Fairey Clyde—the Fairey company is already testing home-produced components.

For initial testing there are two limited ranges in this country; full scale and series testing will take place in Australia. Costs of Woomera and its associated factory at Salisbury are shared with Australia, and Sir Alec Coryton said that great credit was due to the Australians for their enthusiasm and progress.

Chief superintendent at Salisbury, which controls Woomera range, is Mr. H. C. Pritchard, who is on attachment for a period of two years from the R.A.E. Under Sir Alec in this country is the Director of Guided Weapons, Research and Development, Mr. G. W. H. Gardner.

CANBERRA P.R.3

THE existence of a photographic reconnaissance version of the English Electric Canberra, designated Canberra P.R.3, may now be disclosed. As in the marks B.1 and B.2, the turbojets are Rolls-Royce Avons.

ON SHOW IN PARIS

PRODUCTS of several British manufacturers will, as usual, be seen in the Paris Show—to be held at the Grand Palais and at Le Bourget from June 15th to July 1st. A recent list of exhibitors includes the following: Armstrong Siddeley; Blackburn and General Aircraft; Bristol Aeroplane Company; Dowty Equipment; Hawker Siddeley Group; H. M. Hobson; Lodge Plugs; Ministry of Civil Aviation; Rolls-Royce; Vickers-Armstrongs.

INTERPLANETARY RADAR

VISITORS to the London South Bank site during the Festival of Britain will be able to transmit radar impulses to the moon and observe their reflection. The 30ft-diameter aerial for the purpose was manufactured by Blackburn and General Aircraft in light-alloy tubing; it was recently transported to the site for erection on the famous shot tower. Rotation of the aerial will be by remote control from the Dome of Discovery.

Another aeronautical contribution to the Festival (in addition to the list of South-Bank exhibits mentioned in *Flight* of March 23rd) comes from Rolls-Royce, Ltd., who are providing a Dart turboprop for exhibition in the Festival ship *Campania*.



A DERBY BROADCAST: Entitled "The Flight of the Merlin," a Midland Regional broadcast last Monday featured the famous Rolls-Royce engine. R.-R. officials who took part were Mr. A. G. Elliot, C.B.E., director and chief engineer (seen here); Mr. A. C. Lovesey, O.B.E., development engineer; and Capt. R. T. Shepherd, O.B.E., chief test pilot. Mr. John Reid (Rotol, Ltd.) and G/C. Donaldson, D.S.O., A.F.C., and W/C. Tait, D.S.O., D.F.C., also spoke.



GLOBEMASTER LOST

ONE of the greatest air-sea rescue operations ever undertaken followed the loss, on March 23rd, of a Douglas C-124 Globemaster II flying from Limestone, Maine, to Lakenheath, Suffolk. Fifty-three members of the U.S.A.F. were aboard, including Brig. Gen. P. T. Cullen, a reconnaissance specialist. The search, which continued unsuccessfully until March 31st, involved over 100 aircraft and several surface vessels, including the carrier *Coral Sea*. The possibility of an explosion in flight was suggested when numerous small, charred portions of the missing aircraft were found some 500-600 miles south-west of Shannon. Photographs of two of the search aircraft engaged appear on p. 391.

FEBRUARY AIRCRAFT EXPORTS

EXPORTS of British aircraft, engines and accessories (excluding magnetos and tyres) during February totalled in value £4,284,218. This is a considerable increase in comparison with the January figure of £3,516,441.

February imports, at £837,899, were fewer by £165,530 than the January total. The usual breakdown of the values into totals for items is not yet available.

Annual totals for the three years to the end of 1950 were: 1948, £26,004,784; 1949, £34,215,177; 1950, £34,275,423. As these figures include engines and accessories, and because prices of individual aircraft differ widely, the sums bear little direct relation to the numbers of complete aircraft exported. These numbers were 1,099 in 1948, 1,175 in 1949 and 852 in 1950.

MINISTER SEES FOR HIMSELF

VISITS to two important branches of the aircraft industry were made last week by the Minister of Supply, Mr. G. R. Strauss. On March 28th, he saw two sides of Hawker Siddeley activity in Gloucestershire: the A. W. Hawksley works at Brockworth (now building aluminium houses but turning over to Avon production shortly) and the Hucclecote and Moreton Valence sections of the Gloster Aircraft Company. At Hucclecote, Mr. Strauss surveyed the production of Meteors—Mks 7, 8, 9 and 10, for training, fighting and reconnaissance (Mk 11 night fighters, it will be recalled, are produced by Armstrong Whitworth).

Nearly 100 completed Meteors were in evidence at the Gloster airfield, Moreton Valence, where Mr. Strauss was given his first sample of Meteoric speed by S/L. Jim Cooksey, chief production test pilot and holder of the 1,000-km closed-circuit record. Airborne in a Meteor 7 for 15 minutes, Mr. Strauss was suitably thrilled and impressed by the experience.

On the following day, the Minister inspected both aircraft and engine divisions of the Bristol Aeroplane Company at Filton. He saw work in progress on the second Brabazon, the Bristol 171 and 173 helicopters and the Type 175 airliner. Referring to the Brabazon II, Mr. Strauss said that the Government were "entirely happy" about the project. Considerable knowledge was being gained, but no prophecy could be made at present as to the eventual use of the Brabazon.

Earlier, at Gloucester, Mr. Strauss had spoken of the effects of the rearmament programme on the aircraft industry. Production, responding to the large orders now being placed, would mount in a steep curve in 1952-53. Within the engineering industry, some 500,000 people would be employed on rearmament.

MINISTERIAL METEOR: With S/L. Jim Cooksey at the controls, Mr. G. R. Strauss, the Minister of Supply, flew at 500 knots in a Meteor 7 during a 15-minute flight from Moreton Valence last week. Other aspects of the Minister's recent visits to aircraft concerns, reported on this page, are illustrated on pp. 390 and 391.