Deliveries and Services To-day: Production Plans First Details of Series III

On September 30th the ninth B.O.A.C. Series I Comet was delivered at London Airport more than fifteen months ahead of the contract delivery date. Deliveries of Series IAs ordered by Canadian Pacific Airlines, Union Aero Maritime de Transports and the Royal Canadian Air Force, and Airline de la France will now follow on at once until the total order for nineteen Comets has been completed.

Last Tuesday B.O.A.C. inaugurated its third Comet service—oriental. Protocol will be operated twice weekly from the end of the month. On the three routes to Johannesburg, Colombo and Singapore, Comets will then be flying more than 86,000 miles per week. To counteract the need for new production deliveries of B.O.A.C.'s Series II Comets will begin. Deliveries of Comets from Short's Belfast production line are expected to commence during 1954.

In view of the large amount of publicity which has been given to the possibility of American orders for the Comet, both in the British and North American press, the de Havilland company have made an official statement on the future of the Comet, the major part of which is printed below. They have also released the first official details of their plans for the Series III Comet. The statement makes clear the sort of considerations which have been borne in mind when deciding upon the rate and scale of production to be undertaken and in determining the times at which the succeeding marks of Comets can be introduced. The details of the Series II Avon Comet, of which a prototype has now been flying since February 16th, are now fairly well known. (We were surprised to learn that some overseas operators prefer to call the prototype 'Series three' Avon, but the particular powerplant in question is the Rolls-Royce Avon engines.) Apart from the more powerful Rolls-Royce axial turbo-jets, production aircraft will have a slightly longer fuselage and a layout to accommodate at least six more passengers. The initial a.u.w. will be 115,000 lb, cruising speed will be a little higher than for the Series I; and the operating heights will probably be on average 2,000 ft higher.

In accordance to this operator will be the considerably increased stage lengths which the Comet II will be able to handle, together with the increase in passenger accommodation. It is planned to build a large number of Series IIIs to fulfil orders already placed or under negotiation, and many operators realize the advantage of gaining experience during the four-year period between 1954 and 1957 while deliveries of the latest Series III are awaited. The manufacturers state that the value of six years of work already put into the Comet cannot be over emphasized, and although the estimates of the operators, and considerably in excess of orders in hand. The de Havilland company have been bear in mind when deciding upon the rate and scale of production to be undertaken and in determining the times at which the succeeding marks of Comets can be introduced.

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B.O.A.C., whose boldness and foresight did so much to bring the Comet into being, are showing a broad-minded attitude by championing the aircraft among their international competitors, preferring to see the benefits of the new form of propulsion become generally available rather than tocept to the present stage.

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