

A new impression of the Vanguard, as it will appear in T.C.A. colours. Trans-Canada's aircraft will have a higher payload and gross weight than B.E.A. machines, with some structural differences in the wing.

## VICTORY TO THE VANGUARD

### Background to T.C.A.'s Historic Order

AS we briefly recorded last week, Trans-Canada Air Lines—after a long evaluation of six other competing short/medium-haul transports—have decided that the Vickers Vanguard is the right aeroplane for their domestic needs. They have bought 20, and hold an option on a further four.

For two years T.C.A., like many another airline, have been perplexed by the problem of what best to buy for the operation of the medium sectors of their network—the sectors where the bulk of their domestic traffic is concentrated. There is not, and probably never has been, any market in the business which is quite so confused by the number of types being offered, or by the conflicting ideologies of jet *versus* turboprop.

T.C.A. have been ardently wooed by seven firms, British and American. Perhaps no more so than a score of other airlines who have still to make up their medium-haul minds; but they are the first to have come up with a firm decision based on a purely technical assessment, uninfluenced by special considerations such as, for example, the need to steal a march on competitors over particularly rich routes.

Having decided, they have fixed the pattern of their "transportation system" for the next decade: a Rolls-Royce-powered all-turbine fleet of Viscounts, Vanguards, and DC-8s to do the work respectively of their present DC-3s, North Stars and Super Constellations—all of which will be retired by mid-1961. And there are no half-measures about the order which backs up their Vanguard decision. Having spent \$38.6 million on 38 Viscounts and \$28 million on four DC-8s, T.C.A. have now budgeted for a further \$67.1 million for Vanguards (the largest single dollar order ever placed in Britain for any product), so that their total re-equipment programme, if the \$11.7m Vanguard options are

in fact taken up, will cost them no less than \$145.4 million. Why did T.C.A. choose the Vanguard, and what might the effect of their choice be upon the waverers?

T.C.A.'s engineering team is acknowledged to be one of the most competent and respected in the business. "They are firm masters," Mr. George Edwards\* has said, "and a highly efficient and exacting organization to work for. Their evaluation was as complete as I have ever seen in this business."

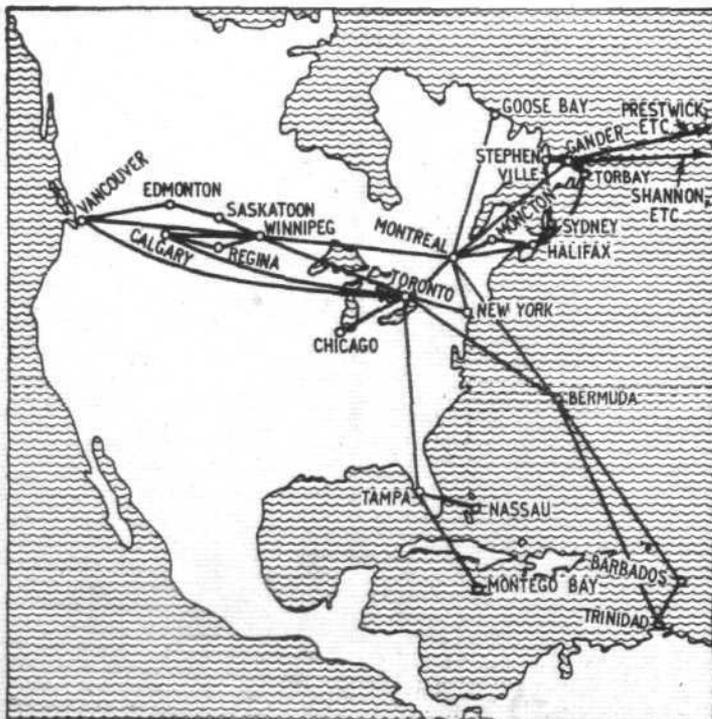
Their assessment and acceptance of the Viscount in 1952, and the resulting "Americanizing" design-changes made by Vickers, undoubtedly accelerated and strengthened the establishment of that aeroplane in the export market. And after T.C.A. had put the Viscount into service they came back with repeat orders on three subsequent occasions. The T.C.A.-Vickers-Rolls relationship was firmly cemented. Why, therefore, did the airline hesitate so long in choosing the Vanguard—a logical extension of an already well-established partnership?

There were, it appears, two very good reasons. One was the Lockheed Electra powered by Rolls-Royce Tyne turboprops; the other was the Douglas DC-9 powered by Rolls-Royce Avon turbojets. There was less to choose between the Vanguard and the Electra than there was between the turboprops and Douglas formulae, where a deep conflict of propulsion ideas existed. Nevertheless, it is no secret now that at several stages of their evaluation T.C.A. were very close to ordering the Electra—influenced perhaps by its earlier delivery date, the high-pressure salesmanship of its makers, and the fact that six airlines had already bought it (e.g., American and Eastern, T.C.A.'s competitors on routes to New York) and would have it operationally well-developed by the time T.C.A. would put it in service.

But it was Douglas with the DC-9 who, about nine months ago, lured T.C.A. and many other airlines away from their turboprop deliberations. Here, sponsored by the firm whose commercial experience and judgment command the profoundest respect, was a short/medium-range jet which appeared to offer nearly all of the turboprop's economy plus the jet's added advantages of higher performance and possibly superior comfort. And the DC-9 also offered something else especially tempting to T.C.A., who had decided to buy DC-8s for their long-haul trans-continental and transatlantic routes. This was the Douglas concept of the "paired jet transportation system," its two units, DC-8 and DC-9, being operationally—and to a very large extent technically—interchangeable.

There was also, it seems, a strong let's-get-rid-of-the-props body of opinion in T.C.A. which felt that a switch to jets for both medium- and long-distance work was a natural and logical evolution. But the sums showed otherwise. "The way the slide rules were clicking around the aviation building offices at T.C.A.," said Mr. Rod MacInnes, the airline's director of public relations, "made it sound like the 40th-street Pool Room at Winnipeg." The jet did not show up so well, at least so far as measurable quantities such as first cost (about 20 per cent more) and cost per seat-mile were concerned. There were two other non-measurable considerations which in time weighed the balance against

\*See New Year Honours, page 50.



All the domestic routes shown on this map may be flown by T.C.A.'s Vanguards; international routes will be shared between the airline's Vanguards and DC-8s. Not shown are the many short-haul routes which, in 1961, will be flown exclusively by Viscounts.