

parliament

KENNETH OWEN

Mr Roy Jenkins' move to the Home Office came as no surprise at Westminster. His abilities were clearly under-utilised outside the Cabinet, and if a move had to be made it was to the country's advantage that he should fill the post of Home Secretary, one of the great offices of State. It was aviation's loss. Mr Jenkins had brought a new realism, decisiveness and intellect to the post of Minister of Aviation. Critics accused him of destroying the aircraft industry, but the Minister's view that the cancellations were essential preventive surgery was later confirmed in painful detail by the Plowden diagnosis.

Certainly it was unfortunate that there had to be a break in aviation continuity at this particular time, with the Plowden recommendations made but not yet implemented. But the new Minister, Mr Mulley, brings an impressive talent to the job (as indicated in the brief biography on page 2). He is popular in the Labour Party as a whole and, through his membership of the Party Executive, has a wide network of friends in the Trade Union movement. He is regarded as a straightforward man, not a theatri-

cal performer, and hardly likely to be judged one of Britain's best-dressed men by the *Tailor and Cutter*. Had he not been a Labour Minister he could have been highly successful in business, it is said, and he has a sense of humour. When Minister of Defence for the Army he was also Deputy Secretary of State for Defence—the only man ever to hold this office.

As parliamentary anchor-man in Whitehall the Ministry of Aviation still has Mr John Stonehouse, the Parliamentary Secretary, whose persistent efforts on behalf of British aviation exports over the past year are highly regarded by all parties at Westminster, and by industry. An ex-RAF pilot with no other aviation interest prior to his appointment in October 1964, Mr Stonehouse has enjoyed a busy year; and it is mainly on his personal initiative that the Government has accepted an active role in selling British aircraft abroad.

On Tuesday, December 21, after announcing the Saudi-Arabian order for a largely British air defence system (see page 19), Mr Stonehouse was congratulated on his efforts by several Members—including Mr Julian Amery, the former Conservative Minister of Aviation. "Having had some part in the early stages I know some of the difficulties that he had to encounter both from the American side and, sometimes, within the British Government machine," Mr Amery declared. "I have heard both from industry and from Saudi quarters that he played a very important part in obtaining this order." A nice tribute—

but beware the Greeks that bear gifts, muttered Mr Julian Snow (Labour, Lichfield and Tamworth).

Mr Robert Carr (Conservative, Mitcham) was suspicious enough to enquire whether there was any link between "the United States Administration's co-operation on this order" and a possible British order for the F-111. Mr Stonehouse said no, there was not. Mr Robert Howarth (Labour, Bolton East) asked what missiles the Lightnings would carry. Mr Stonehouse said this was confidential. The previous day Mr Howarth had extracted from the Minister of Aviation, in a written reply, the fact that requirements for the Red Top air-to-air missile were "under review." Behind Mr Howarth's questions was concern for possible redundancies at the HSD factories at Lostock and Farnworth—was not Red Top being considered for use with the Phantom and P.1127 aircraft and for the Saudi-Arabian Lightnings; if so, why the review?

The Commons committee stage of the Air Corporations Bill was completed, as hoped, before the Christmas adjournment on December 22. Other end-of-term items included a discussion on December 22 of noise at Gatwick Airport; and the tabling of a motion on the same day by a group of Ulster Unionist MPs led by Mr Stanley McMaster (Belfast East) which condemned the references in the Plowden Report to Short Bros & Harland.

Parliament reassembles on January 25; this column is now adjourned until Thursday, January 27.

management

ROBERT BLACKBURN

A year ago *Flight's* leader page announced the start of a regular column about the Press. By the time the column ground to a halt last week it had given 30,000 words to its subject, and had also attracted considerable attention, and some controversy in *Flight's* letters pages. The Press column ended at my request because I felt that it had made its point; at some future time (not reached, I hope) it would have become a routine exercise with nothing really new to say.

So much for the old column: now, about the new one. "Management," unlike its predecessor, will not simply wade into its subject without defining its origin and purpose. The first suggestion that *Flight* should regularly devote space to management subjects came from a reader, Mr D. C. McDouall, in a letter published on December 9. The idea appealed to me and the editor gave it his blessing. It seems to me a promising start that this feature should have

originated in *Flight's* letters page, which in any serious journal must be the gauge of how the paper is serving the interests of its readers. This paper is primarily for people professionally interested in the aviation industries and organisations associated with them. It may be a platitude to say that major parts of those industries are undergoing a period of upheaval, but it has to be said. Industries may be producers or operators of hardware of one sort or another, but first and foremost they are groups of people. Management is the process of successfully co-ordinating the ideas, aspirations and efforts of people. It is, of course, an abstract subject, but this column will attempt to approach it in a practical way. The intention is to report on aspects of management rather than to exhort or admonish. This column will not be a one-man band. Several knowledgeable and responsible people will join this writer—under their own names, incidentally. (It would not be difficult to solicit anonymous contributions from people frustrated by their own company's management techniques; but, seeking to practice what it preaches in the important matter of public accountability, this journal has set its face against anonymity.) Of all the subjects which will require re-thinking during the coming year, none is more fundamental, I believe, to the future of the British

aircraft industry than that of management. Many readers of the Plowden Report must have been appalled, as I was, by the fleeting and superficial attention it gave to this vital topic.

Getting down to cases, these are a few of the management subjects which seem to us—and I hope, to readers—worthy of attention: programme techniques for development and production (e.g., PERT—who uses it, how and why?); company internal communication (e.g., ways of telling employees about company aims and progress; also, ways of finding out employees' attitudes and responses); budgetary control (e.g., the relationship between accountants and other managers); company education programmes (e.g., the aims and achievements of apprentice training systems)... The list could be endless, because there will be no last word on the subject of management problems or their solution.

Responsible journalism should contribute something of value to the society which supports it. We hope that our series on management will be such a contribution. Its success will depend upon an unusual degree of reader participation and response—so any reader with sympathy for our objective and something to say openly on the subject is most welcome to write to me at Heathrow House, Bath Road, Cranford, Middlesex, or telephone Skyport 9430.