



## Sport and Business

NEW DETAILS are available of the SAAC-23 high-speed executive aircraft which Mr William P. Lear Sr, chairman of Lear Inc, plans to build in Europe. The aircraft will have a low-wing configuration and a span of about 35ft, and will be powered by two General Electric CJ610-2A turbojets. It will be designed for a cruising speed of 535 m.p.h. at 30,000ft, with a range of 1,500 miles (against a 60 m.p.h. headwind) plus a 45min holding period. The aircraft should operate from a 2,500ft runway at elevations up to 6,000ft on a 100°F day. Gross weight will be under 12,000lb, with a payload of seven people, baggage and 300lb of equipment.

A special autopilot with "features never before available in anything but the most classified high-performance military aircraft" is being designed by Lear Inc for the new machine, which will be equipped to make approaches down to a break-off height of 50ft using standard ILS.

It is intended to subcontract production of the basic airframe to several European manufacturers. Airframes will then be shipped to the USA, where individual distributors will be responsible for installing engines, some instrumentation, and the interior furnishings. This plan is designed to eliminate the cost of shipping powerplants and instruments from the USA to Switzerland and then back to the US in a complete aircraft. For flight test and FAA certification, however, two prototypes will be assembled in Switzerland by Flug und Fahrzeugwerke.

No plans are being made for distributing the aircraft until after this year's Paris Show. The basic cost of the aircraft, without interior, radio, autopilot or radar will be \$250,000 (£90,000). It is hoped to roll out the first prototype by December 1961, and to begin deliveries during 1963. The SAAC-23 will be designed under the overall personal direction of Mr Lear and the direct engineering leadership of Hans Studer, designer of the Swiss P.16. Studer is now technical director of Aircraft Development Corporation, a Swiss corporation in St Gallen, whose entire efforts are at the disposal of Swiss American Aviation Corporation, a Delaware corporation owned personally by Mr Lear.

THE NEW AUSTRALIAN lightplane manufacturer, Victa Consolidated Industries of Sydney, is making a determined bid for overseas markets, including the United Kingdom and Europe. They have applied for space at the Paris Show and at Farnborough, are considering such exhibitions as that at Hanover, and have booked space at the Singapore Air Show in April. They feel that their Air Tourer two-seater, and perhaps the four-seat R-2, should have an appeal abroad.

The prototype Air Tourer, built by its designer Mr Henry Millicer and his friends with wooden main-spar and wing and a Continental A-65 engine, has been re-engined with an A-95 at Victa and has been touring New Zealand for demonstration



Some 250 aircraft—not all of them Pipers—were flown in to Vero Beach Airport, Florida, for Piper Aircraft Corporation's open house on January 8. The company's new manufacturing plant was dedicated, and Mr William T. Piper's 80th birthday was celebrated. Those present included Max Conrad, Rev Billy Graham, Florida's Tangerine Bowl Queen and Citrus Queen, the Vero Beach Dolphinettes and Vero Beach High School Band

flights. It will tour Australia in February and March, while the all-metal production model comes off the line and does the test-flying for the Department of Civil Aviation C of A.

The production aircraft also has an A-95 engine. Victa plan to show the Air Tourer at both Singapore and Farnborough and, in the absence of any British aircraft of this type, the company hopes for UK orders. Production will be one a week from May, and the price in Britain should be around £3,500-£4,000 sterling.

The R-2, designed by Mr Luigi Pellarini, should also have an export appeal if it can be suitably priced. The actual price, even in Australia, cannot be accurately assessed but would be around £A6,500. The prototype was originally planned to fly last October, but this is now due in late January or early February. It may complete C of A requirements within two months. Meanwhile a production line has been set up.

Victa already have letters-of-intent from the Auckland Aero Club for six Air Tourers and four R-2s, from the Royal Victorian Aero Club for 15 Air Tourers, from the Latrobe (Victoria) Aero Club for two Air Tourers with an option on one R-2, and from the Royal Aero Club of New South Wales for three Air Tourers. Several more local orders have been announced, but not identified except that they are in business flying.

The company has formed an aviation division under Mr R. C. Kerville, a wartime RAAF pilot and well-known businessman. Fifty employees are now on the payroll and 150 more will be employed in the aviation division within a year. The firm is investing around £A350,000 in a new aircraft factory at its 37-acre plant at Milperra, near Bankstown, NSW. A hangar is also being erected on the nearby Bankstown Aerodrome.

The firm has a third aircraft in the design stage, about which it will not yet make any statement. This is a two-seat autogyro which is being designed by Mr John Blackler.

As well as trying for the European market, Victa are already making a study of the South African possibilities and will probably send an Air Tourer to the Union later this year. They are also planning to tackle the Indian market.

### RETROSPECT

From "Flight" of January 28, 1911

Miscellaneous Advertisements—Financial (18 words 1/6. 1d. word after): GENTLEMAN desirous of flying wanted with £200, to provide engine for aeroplane of especially stable type, with greatly improved control arrangements over present aeroplanes; a great step in advance, embodying recent experience; almost certain to make £5,000 a year for the next three years.—Wrought, c/o J. D. Roots & Co., Thanet House, Temple Bar, W.C.

THE TWO HAWK TRAINERS and Auster 5 of the Experimental Flying Group, based at Biggin Hill, flew a total of 754hr during 1960. Reporting a highly successful year, chief flying instructor R. H. Nicholls mentions a number of foreign flights, which included that of the Auster to the Swiss Watch Rally at Bienne and a 3,000-mile tour of Scandinavia by Hawk Trainer G-AKAS. The Group's Jean Bird Memorial Cup for navigation was won in 1960 by Mr B. Bennett, whose flying for the year included visits to no fewer than 17 airfields on the Continent. During the summer a fourth annual camp was held at the Ipswich base of the East Anglian Flying Club.

THE ACCIDENT RATE for general aviation in the United States during 1960 remained at approximately the same level as in the previous year, with an estimated 4,600 accidents. Of these 393 were fatal, accounting for 850 persons killed, i.e., a rate of 20.6 fatalities per 100m passenger-miles flown. During the year the Federal Aviation Agency established a rule that applicants for private pilots' certificates were required to have a minimum standard of instrument-flying ability—sufficient to enable them to fly safely out of bad weather.

A number of FAA research projects during 1960 were directed specifically towards the needs of the private pilot. These included the development of a better weather information service and of a simple visual glide-path system for bad-weather landings at small airports.

Looking somewhat French at the front and Polish at the rear, this attractive 15-metre sailplane is in fact the Dutch Sagitta, designed by Piet Alsema and built by N. V. Vliegtuigbouw at Tenge Airfield. Now being test flown, the type has an aspect ratio of 18.8, gross weight of 705lb, and a best gliding angle "well over 1:30"