



First flight and ground views of the Victa Air Tourer Mk. 11, VH-MVA, taken at Bankstown on December 12. Test pilot Randy Green reported that "everything went entirely as planned for the half hour the Air Tourer was up. The aircraft handled delightfully, cruising comfortably at 106 knots (at 2600 rpm, ht. 1500 ft.)." Tests are proceeding.



in its application before the ATLB for approval for a service round the West African coast to Lagos, withdrew its applications stating that the grounds on which the Minister had decided against Cunard Eagle could apply to every other application to compete with either BOAC or BEA and that the proceedings of the ATLB were therefore a farce.

The Board had held, in its judgment, that having regard to the volume of East Coast traffic, it did not think that one North Atlantic return service daily by a second UK operator could be described as "wasteful." New traffic might be generated by a new operator, but there would be diversion and probably "material diversion" of traffic from BOAC. It also accepted the BOAC evidence that the airline had entered into aircraft purchase commitments designed to cater for all the traffic which it might reasonably have expected to carry on this and all their other routes over the next five or six years, but added: "We do not regard this as precluding the advent of a second UK operator on the United States East Coast route as now licensed." The Appeal Commissioner held that there was inconsistency in these findings; and that the Board had made no finding regarding the need or demand for the Cunard Eagle service—a need or demand which, in his opinion, did not exist. Sir Fred also expressed his opinion that, in view of these matters, the ATLB in granting a licence "were not exercising their functions of furthering the development of British civil aviation."

The Minister, in general, agreed with the Commissioner's finding, while expressing the opinion that the ATLB were properly exercising their duty to further the future of British aviation. He said it was clear that the Board, as they were fully entitled to do, brought to bear on the matter considerations other than those listed in the relevant part of the Act and formed opinions which their experience and expert knowledge fitted them to do. Two considerations weighed heavily with them. . . . "The view that, if the licence were refused . . . on the ground that the second operator would cause material diversion from the existing British operator, this would freeze the situation on the route in question and all other routes, and the Board could not believe that this was the intention of the Act. . . . The expectation that the traffic would grow to such an extent and so rapidly that the additional capacity offered by a second operator would still leave ample room for the first and that, in any event, the total volume of the traffic, and the British share thereof, would be increased."

Mr Thornycroft said he "did not dissent from the

Board's view that it was not the intention of the Act to freeze the existing situation," but equally he did not consider that a decision to withhold a licence on the ground that it would materially divert traffic from the existing British operator would necessarily have that effect. "All the circumstances of the particular route . . . must be taken into account. The circumstances of one route will plainly differ from the circumstances of other routes," he stated.

From this distance it seems that Cunard Eagle was defeated in its immediate objective more by the circumstances of the time, and the particular route, than by any other factor. The forecast that BOAC faced a loss of £10,000,000 in 1961-62—with the North Atlantic one of the main economic danger areas—would be enough to deter any Minister with Parliamentary responsibility for the national corporations. The differences in interpretation of a not very precise Act between the Board and the Appeal Commissioner need not necessarily establish precedents binding on the ATLB in future decisions. It will thus be interesting to see what action is taken by the Board in the applications by BUA for routes to the Far East . . . a decision in which Qantas is closely interested. Despite the appeal machinery it is the Minister who has the final say in applying Government policy. As he points out, "the circumstances on one route will plainly differ from the circumstances of other routes."

#### VICTA AIR TOURER PROGRAM

FLIGHT testing of the first all-metal Victa Air Tourer, designed by Mr H. K. Millicer, was begun at Bankstown Aerodrome, NSW, on December 12 and the aircraft will be submitted for Type Approval probably late this month. Parallel with the testing program—a strong expression of confidence by the company—Victa is proceeding with the construction of the second, third and fourth aircraft and three aircraft will be available for delivery immediately Type Approval is given by DCA. By this time, next month, the production schedule calls for completion of one aircraft a week. Associated time factor for production of each unit will then be six weeks, which suggests a well organised and smooth-flowing line at the company's Milperra factory to back up a sales campaign aimed not only at the aero clubs but also the light executive field.

Victa reports already that an export market for the Air Tourer is being developed. The aircraft, a side-by-side 2-place, low wing monoplane, powered by a 100 hp Continental 0-200 engine, is expected to have a top speed of 130 mph and a range of 840 miles. Verified performance figures will not be released until the manufacturers' trials are completed. Less radio, the aircraft will sell for £3950.

#### CHARTER LICENCES TO BE LIMITED?

A SPECIAL meeting of the Association of Commercial Flying Organisations (ACFO) at Bankstown on December 7 considered a proposal that a request should be made to the Department of Civil Aviation to restrict the issue of new Charter Licences.

Charter operators from all States supported the proposal and expressed the opinion that it was essential to place the charter industry on a firm footing by giving long established operators some form of protection. These operators were investing large sums in expensive modern equipment and in many cases were having the natural growth of the demand for charter flying in their area drained off by new operators who, in some cases, were price cutting and reducing safety standards.

Operators claimed that it would be in the public interest to stabilise rates and operating practices in order to ensure a satisfactory standard of safety and service and that price cutting and unhealthy competition had exactly the opposite effect. At the present time no thought was given as to whether any particular area could support another operator before a new licence was issued and this policy was having a most unsatisfactory effect on the industry.

Charter operators attending the meeting pointed out that licences to operate airlines, bus services, taxi cabs, hire cars and practically every other form of transport were restricted in order to ensure some form of economic stability and that there was no reason why the same policy should not be applied to air charter licences. The opinion was expressed that when an application for a new licence was made the applicant should be required to produce evidence and prove a case that a need existed for an additional operator in the area in which he intended to operate.

The meeting reached a decision to approach both DCA and State Transport authorities with a request for an early conference regarding this matter.