

● BOAC opened the Comet service between London and Singapore on October 14. Flying time is approx. 20 hours—trip time is just over 27 hours. The service will be bi-weekly as from this month.

● A net deficit of £1,423,611 for British European Airways' fifth year of operations, which ended last March, was recorded in the annual report and accounts of the Corporation published on September 29. The loss for the previous year was £979,267. The report stated that the year was one of intense endeavor for the Corporation, and substantial achievements combined, unfortunately, with some severe disappointments, leading to an increased deficit. " . . . Serious delays in the delivery of new aircraft, combined with the steep rise in wages and prices during the year, the necessity of flying increased sector distances, and enforced cutback in revenue earnings during July and August because of an industrial dispute, resulted in an increase in expenditure greater than the increase in revenue. The unfavorable trend is likely to continue — in spite of the most strenuous efforts to combat it — until, on present Budget forecasts, about April or May, 1953. By then the cumulative effect of the new aircraft types, together with improvements in methods, now in hand, should begin to overtake the effect of rising prices. . . ."

**BUTLER DEVELOPMENTS**

At an extraordinary general meeting of Butler Air Transport Pty. Ltd. on October 16 it was agreed "that the name of the company be changed to Butler Air Transport Ltd., and that the company become a public company." This followed an explanation from the directors that "it is in the interests of the company to become a public company in order that there should be no restriction on the number of members and that the company's shares should be more freely transferable."

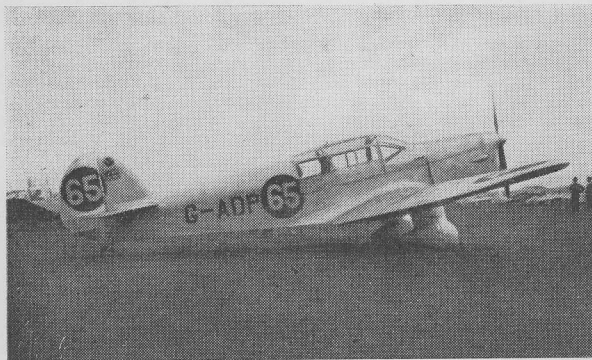
It will be recalled that Butler's on September 9 offered its 228 employes about 35,000 £1 shares at their par value, though the shares were then worth more than 30 shillings each, and the company had averaged an annual dividend of 10 percent since it was formed in 1946; only 10 percent deposit was asked. Final figures of this new share issue were that 187 employes applied for 32,300 shares.

Butler's first Heron arrived in the hands of Butler operations manager Tom Young, last month. It will be used as a 15-seater with a crew of two, but no hostess service; the trips will be short — longest leg 1 hr. 55 min., and shortest 22 min. — so no meals will be served.

Managing director Arthur Butler expects an annual utilisation of 2630 hr., cruising at 165 MPH. He plans to begin Heron operations this month, and eventually to use a Heron fleet over his entire system.

**DROVER GROUNDING LIFTED**

The general grounding order imposed on September 11 by DCA on all Drover aircraft — there were 11



Still going strong! Many of our readers will be interested in this particular Percival Gull Six; it is the original aircraft in which Jean Batten set up several records including the England-Australia in five days 21 hours, in 1936. This machine was used throughout the war by the RAF on communication duties, and was bought by the Percival company in 1946. This photograph was taken at Shoreham, UK, during the recent Daily Express air race, when this veteran was flown by Shell's G/C Douglas Bader.



TAA superintendent of technical services John L. Watkins (left) signs the contract for six Vickers Viscount aircraft on behalf of the Australian National Airlines Commission. Others in the picture are Vickers Armstrongs chief designer G. R. Edwards (standing), V-A director of contracts R. P. H. Yapp and general manager T. Gammon. On the table is a model of the Viscount produced by Vickers showing the aircraft with TAA markings and registration lettering VH-LJW — a nice touch. ANA are also getting six Viscounts which will be financed by a Commonwealth Government guarantee of funds to purchase new equipment and spares (full details in next issue). Both airlines expect first deliveries during the second half of 1954.

in operation in Australia and New Guinea—has been provisionally lifted subject to the following modifications:

Propeller blade retaining nuts to be replaced with new nuts having internal surfaces blended and polished and otherwise additionally treated, the new nuts being subject to complete replacement every 100 hours;

Engine operation to conform to RPM restrictions of 2450 maximum for takeoff, 2200-2400 for climb, 1800-1900 or 2200-2300 for cruising, with a total prohibition on the ranges between 1500 and 1800;

Spark plug inspection every 10 hours.

These provisions suggest that DCA consider overstressing of the propeller blade retaining nuts within certain RPM ranges, where rough running tendencies apply, may result in a fatigue failure.

Supplies of the new nuts are unlikely to be available in sufficient quantity for some weeks, and the temporary fitment of Fairey-Reed fixed-pitch propellers in place of the normal VP installation, seems likely to be generally adopted.

Meanwhile, the provisional permit will tide operators over while redesign problems are tackled.

**AIRSCREW FIRM MOVES TO NEW QUARTERS**

Perfectus Airscrew Co. advises a change of address to 175 Mason St., Newport, Victoria, where they will continue to manufacture wooden aircrew components. However, Perfectus wish to point out to model aircraft enthusiasts that they have discontinued for some time the manufacture of model aircraft propellers.

**COMET SALE TO AMERICA**

As we close for press we learn by cable from London that de Havillands have sold three Comet IIIs with an option on a further seven to Pan American World Airways, for delivery in 1956.

The implications of this American order for British jet transports are far reaching, and should go some way in getting "the production line of Comet IIs and IIIs really rolling" (see Stanley Brogden's article on the Comet on page 40, together with "Observer's" assessment of the American jet transport picture).

This latest order brings the total value of British gas turbine airliners ordered so far to more than £54 million, of which £20 million is represented by overseas buyers.

END.