

# BRITAIN CALLING



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"Fly Empire" looks like succeeding the "Fly British" slogan for British air routes, temporarily at least, and winning the competition of American versus Canadian-built aircraft which has been going on for some time. A Cabinet sub-committee which has been considering the question of aircraft for the three British airline corporations has decided to recommend the purchase of some 20 Canadair DC-4M North Stars. This decision has now been confirmed by the Cabinet, but it was thought that there might be changes, especially as the sub-committee's decision to recommend the DC-4M4 was understood not to have been unanimous.

The controversy about equipment for the British corporations, whether or not to continue flying interim British types for the next year or two, or to buy more Constellations or to buy DC-4Ms, had been waged for some months. But for the dollar position Constellations would probably have won but the Treasury is believed to have opposed this on the grounds of the dollar expenditure involved and the decision was then between the DC-4M4 and the Tudor.

The report on the Tudor I has now been received and presumably will be published at some future date.

Now the Cabinet has agreed to the purchase of the DC-4M4, it is expected that this type will be used by B.O.A.C. on some of the Empire routes. The Corporation has 11 Constellations, including the five bought from Aer Rianta the Irish company, which will be enough for the North Atlantic and the Australia route.

This decision about aircraft for the Corporations has probably been

one of the most difficult of any connected with British civil aviation. No matter what the final decision, Constellation, DC-4M4, or Tudor, it would be criticized and controversy would continue. The British Aircraft Industry naturally opposed the adoption of any but a "Fly British" policy, with some justice, but if only British aircraft of the types available at present were used for the next year or two, then continued—and probably heavy—losses must be expected from the Corporation.

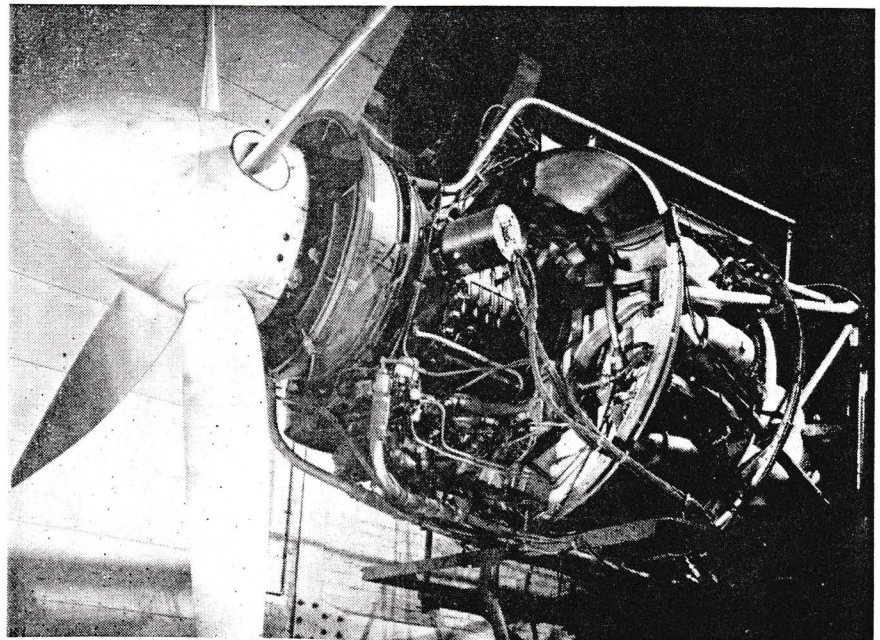
Two of the major points in the argument against the DC-4M4 for the British routes were that it would add yet another type of B.O.A.C.'s already mixed fleet, increasing maintenance and similar costs, such as crew training and, that as a type it is com-

parable with the Handley Page Hermes, a number of which have been ordered for the Empire routes. The Hermes is expected to be ready next year.

Little profit is ever gained from bewailing the past but if only the Tudors (a number of which will probably be used by B.S.A.A.), had been pushed through and been ready two years or even 18 months ago, or, if DC-4Ms had been acquired when the suggestion was first made well over a year ago, much might have been saved.

## Theseus Endurance Test

Meanwhile important advances are being made with propeller-turbine engines, the next step forward for British air liners. At the beginning of this year the Ministry of Supply introduced a new type of 250 hours' endurance test for gas turbines especially designed to demonstrate that they would require far less maintenance than piston engines. The tests were to be made under the supervision of the Air Registration Board and among the conditions were that no engine should attempt the test until it had successfully completed the new type test of 150 hours duration and qualified for both Military and Civil approval. Also, the test was to be run in 17 non-stop cycles of 10 hours duration and 16 non-stop cycles of 5 hours in a "sealed" hangar test bed; the engine



A photograph of the new Bristol Theseus taken shortly after completing a 250 hour endurance test.. After picture was taken the test was continued and shortly reached 280 hours with no indication of how long it could be carried on.