

By Arthur Macdonald

IN A well-organized demonstration at Rockcliffe Airport, the RCAF took the wraps off its three latest aircraft: the de Havilland Vampire III; the Canadair North Star (cargo version); and the Sikorsky S-51 helicopter. The new machines went through their paces before a large gallery of high-ranking military and government officials, foreign air attaches and representatives of the aviation industry.

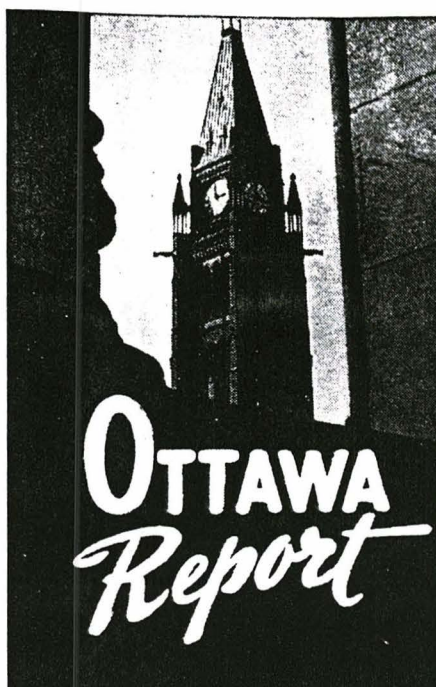
Although none of the new types could possibly be considered "secret" or "restricted," the demonstration created widespread interest because it gave many outside of the Service their first opportunity of examining all three at close range.

Despite a tough break from the weatherman, the Rockcliffe show went off almost as planned. As expected, two Vampires (flown by de Hav's Russ. Bannock and RCAF S/Ldr. "Bill" Foster) stole the show. Flying through lightly falling snow, with visibility almost nil and temperature near zero, the tiny fighters made low-level passes over the field at 500 mph. and impressed onlookers with their handling qualities. But as far as most observers were concerned the Vampire's outstanding virtue was its ability to get into the air only a few minutes after being wheeled out of the hangar. This performance seemed to dispel many doubts as to the jet-engine's cold weather capabilities.

High point of the helicopter demonstration was reached when the rotary-winged craft convincingly displayed its air-rescue possibilities. Piloted by F/O S. E. M. Milliken, the S-51 descended to within a few feet of the ground and picked up an airman from a four-foot-square stand in front of the hangar. After circling the field, it hovered at 50 ft. altitude and returned the airman to his tiny perch by lowering him on a winch-controlled steel cable. The winch, mounted above and slightly behind the cockpit, is standard equipment on RCAF search and rescue helicopters.

One of these machines, operating out of Greenwood, N.S., has already been used in several east coast mercy flights.

A SEQUEL to the RCAF show was provided by Babb Co. (Canada) Ltd., which, on the following day, brought a jet-assisted Canso from Montreal for display at Rockcliffe. One of a shipment intended for the Argentinian



tinian Navy, the Canso performed before members of parliament, military officials and representatives of the Argentine Embassy. Probably the most interested spectators were pilots of the RCN Naval Air Division (who might be the first to use the "jet-assist" technique if it were adopted by the Canadian armed forces).

To provide additional thrust for takeoff, the converted Cansoes are equipped with two JATO units mounted one on each side of the hull about half way down. (Aircraft weighing more than 34,000 lb. require four or eight units.) Manufactured by Aero-Jet Engineering Corp. of Azusa, U.S.A., they are similar to those used by the U. S. Navy and Marine Corps during the war. Each unit burns for 17 seconds and produces sufficient thrust in that time to get a slow machine like the Canso off the ground with a run of about 100 yards.

The first demonstration flight was made by ex-U. S. Marine "Bill" Gore, now with Aero-Jet. On the takeoff Bill opened the throttles fully and fired the jet cartridges almost simultaneously. Streaming twin plumes of white smoke, the Canso gathered speed quickly as it moved down the runway. After a remarkably short run, the nose was pulled up and the aircraft was at 200 ft. and leveled off by the time the jets were burned out. Further takeoffs, equally as impressive as the first, were made with Argentine Navy pilots at the controls.

The JATO installation is surprisingly simple. Jet units are carried in a small bracket welded to the airframe and no special aircraft modifi-

cations are required. Each installation costs \$125 and, after being used, the jet cartridges can be recharged for \$30 apiece.

EVER since Reconstruction Minister, C. D. Howe moved to Trade and Commerce to supervise the Government's emergency dollar-exchange program, the parliamentary status of civil aviation has been poorly defined. Mr. Howe has held the aviation portfolio since before the war, taking it with him from Transport to Munitions and Supply and finally to the Dept. of Reconstruction. But with his latest move, it was expected that civil aviation would shortly return to its logical status under the Minister of Transport.

To date, the only official indication of when such a switch might take place was contained in the Prime Minister's statement of Jan. 24. Reduced to its simplest terms, the statement reveals that civil aviation will return to Transport only when the Dept. of Reconstruction is officially closed.

At present, there is no Minister of Reconstruction. But there is a deputy-minister: Commander C. P. Edwards, who transferred from Transport when Mr. Howe moved to Trade and Commerce. It is understood that Commander Edwards now gives particular attention to civil aviation and reports directly to Mr. Howe.

The newly appointed deputy minister of transport is J. C. Lessard, former director of transport economics. When Reconstruction folds up he will be joined by C. P. Edwards who, as associate deputy, will continue to give most of his time to civil aviation and will report to the Minister of Transport. When will this final switch take place? No one seems to know exactly, but informed guessers say sometime near the end of 1948.

AS THIS is written, the Government's important Bill 3 is having a tough time getting through its second reading in the House of Commons. This bill, which outlines regulations governing the imports of goods (including aircraft and parts) from the U. S. A., is being studied carefully in committee and many changes are being made.

It will be recalled that Bill 3 was to become law "sometime around Feb. 1." But with parliament carefully scrutinizing every item and a third reading still to come, it will probably be mid-March before the bill is officially proclaimed.