

RCAF Comets fly again

CHESTER, Eng.—The RCAF Air Transport Command's Comet 1A's will be flying again next year to give the most rapid air transport of any North American military service.

Again they will also fill the added role of providing the Air Defense Command's radar lines and CF-100 squadrons with a simulated bomber to practice detection and interception.

► **Performance.** The reborn RCAF Comets will be easier to fly, will have a ceiling of about 40,000 ft. and a safe life of 5,000 hrs. which will likely be extended to double that figure.

The aircraft will again be fully pressurized to 8¼ lbs. per square inch and have already been tested structurally to six times the life of the aircraft.

Since the Certificate of Airworthiness has already been given on the Comet II's the C of A's for the RCAF's Comets will follow automatically as they are identical except for a slightly shorter fuselage.

► **Modifications.** At de Havilland's sprawling Chester plant the two RCAF Comets are being modified structurally to include two stages: about 70 modifications were introduced before the second BOAC Comet accident, as a result of the first one; a second set of modifications has now been introduced as a result of the hundreds of tests the Comet structures have undergone.

- The structure of the fuselage has

been redesigned around all openings—windows, doors, escape, access and equipment hatches and baggage bay doors.

This is the result of weaknesses which showed up in pressure tank testing since June 1954 at the Royal Aeronautical Establishment.

What's sought is a grading of stress around the openings by a building up of thicknesses from the cabin wall to the opening.

To do this old panels with the openings are being cut out and replaced by new thicker 18 gauge panels which are back jointed redux bonded and rivetted to the thinner cabin wall.

- The wing leading edges are being drooped to increase the lift near the ground. This will enable the aircraft to be taken-off with the tail right down without approaching a stall condition.

- The wings are being reinforced around the wheel bays to eliminate the possibility of stress cracks occurring in the wing skin as a result of hard landings or heavy gusting conditions while slow flying near the ground.

MAJOR REFIT. Top, one of the RCAF's two de Havilland Comets prior to the ferry back to England. Centre, a reinforced port installed. Bottom right, offering up a new fuselage panel. Bottom left, assembly of the new fuselage panel from the inside.

