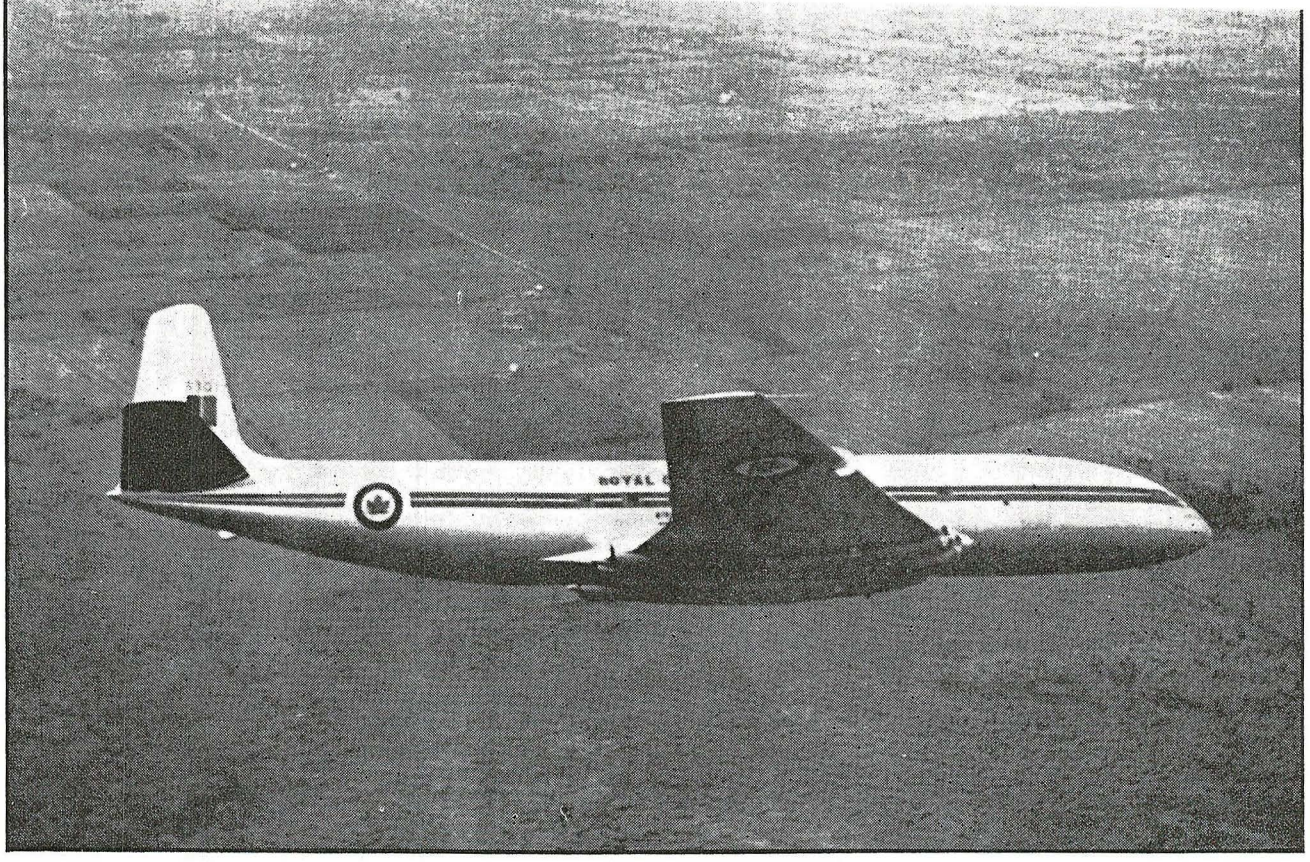

The Comet Arrives

SINCE the arrival of the RCAF's two de Havilland Comets in recent weeks, they have become a familiar sight in Canadian skies. The first aircraft arrived at Ottawa's Uplands Airport at 2:57 pm EDT on May 29, and the second touched down at Uplands at 3:32 pm EDT on June 16.

The first aircraft was naturally received with some ceremony, as befitted the first turbojet transport to cross the Atlantic Ocean, and the first turbojet transport to join a military service. On hand were Defence Minister Brooke Claxton, Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal C. R. Slemon, and AOC of Air Transport Command, Air Commodore Robert C. Ripley, as well as a host of other high ranking officers and civil officials.

The captain of the first aircraft, Comet 1A 5301, was Squadron Leader C. S. Olsen, but also aboard was Squadron Leader J. D. Dickson, DFC, AFC, DFM, commanding officer of the Comet Flight (which comprises the personnel associated with the operation of the two aircraft). Though nominally S/L Olsen was captain, S/L Dickson spelled him as first pilot and in fact was at the controls at take-off from London. Turns in the right hand seat were taken by Wing Commander H. A. Morrison, DSO, DFC, AFC, commanding officer of 412 Squadron, to which the Comet Flight is attached, Flight Lieutenant Ralph G. Herbert, DFC, and Flight Lieutenant M. D. Broadfoot, in that order. There were a total of 27 aboard this first Comet, including two de Havilland service engineers.

THE PICTURES: Top, Comet 5301 joins the circuit at Uplands. Above, Defence Minister Brooke Claxton and Chief of the Air Staff A/M C. R. Slemon greet the Comet's captain, S/L C. S. Olsen. On opposite page are other views of 5301 after landing. Centre are members of DH Canada board of directors on hand to welcome the Comet; L to R, Engineering Director W. D. Hunter, Sales Director C. H. Dickins, and W. W. Parry.

The log of the historic flight shows that take-off was made from London Airport at 4:23 am GMT. First leg of the journey, London-Keflavik, took 4 hrs. 2 mins.; Keflavik-Goose Bay, 4 hrs. 12 mins.; Goose Bay-Uplands, 2 hrs. 6 mins. Total flying time for the 3,550 mile journey was 10 hrs. 20 mins. About 2½ hrs. was spent on the ground at Keflavik and departure from Goose Bay was timed for arrival at Uplands at 3:00 pm EDT so as to coincide with the welcoming ceremonies.

Actual arrival over the airport was about 2:53 pm EDT, when the aircraft flew past at approximate'y 500 feet before making a circuit and landing at 2:57 pm EDT.

Describing the flight later, S/L Olsen said that the weather had been good all the way; it had been clear at London, and though there was a 2,000 ft. ceiling at Keflavik, there had been 5 8 miles visibility. A cruising altitude of be-between 34- and 38,000 feet had been maintained and a cruising speed of about 385 knots, or some 440 mph.

The Jet Stream: He reported that at one time they had encountered the jet stream, which was computed at

speeds as high as 170 mph. However, even this formidable headwind component did not prevent the aircraft averaging take-off to touchdown speeds of over 340 mph. for the entire journey.

The second Comet to make the journey did it in 9 hrs. 23 mins., or 57 minutes less than the first machine. Captain on the second aircraft was Squadron Leader W. L. Lloyd.

Defence Minister Brooke Claxton and the RCAF have frequently said that the Comets were being purchased to provide something called "simulated interception work and radar calibration". However, with the delivery of the machines, the RCAF announced that "The Comets . . . will provide facilities for high-speed movement of material and personnel." The simulated interception work is now mentioned as an additional chore. That the Comets will be used more for VIP transport work than the Air Force first wanted to admit, is emphasized by the fact that both aircraft have standard air line interiors, with the 44 place seating arrangement of the Series 1A. So far as can be ascertained, the only way in which the RCAF's Comets differ from a commercial version is in the matter of instrumentation and radio.

Deceptive Size: The Comet 1A has a gross weight of 115,000 lbs. and in spite of this weight, the first impression one gets of this aircraft is that it is deceptively small. This may be partly explained by its very trim lines and beautiful proportioning; in addition, it was noted that the tare weight of the aircraft was less than 50,000 lbs., which gives a rather large disposable load, indicating that the aircraft is much smaller than its maximum gross weight would indicate.

The 1A is powered by four de Havilland Ghost 50 turbojets which develop 5,050 lbs. st. th. at sea level for take-off. These engines are fitted with water-methanol injection which gives them an added boost for take-off under tropical conditions or from high airports. The Comet 1A has a fuel capacity of 7,000 gallons, or 1,000 gallons more than the Series 1. With this fuel load, it can carry a capacity payload of 13,500 lbs. over stage-lengths of about 1,800 miles, according to de Havilland.