

aviation intelligence

U. K. Mergers Mounting

The past month must have seen a record for news of proposed and established mergers in the British Aircraft Industry. The Hawker Siddeley Group Ltd., and de Havilland Holdings Ltd. agreed to recommend a merger. Integration of these two concerns would form the most powerful group of its kind in the British Commonwealth; both have interests in Canada, Australia and other countries. The acquisition of the Blackburn Group, formerly Blackburn and General Aircraft Ltd., by Hawker Siddeley was also proposed. These moves are not expected to affect the Canadian operations of the companies concerned.

Another giant will emerge from the agreement of Vickers, English Electric and Bristol to amalgamate their aircraft and guided weapon companies. They will form a new company with three wholly-owned subsidiaries, namely Vickers Armstrong (Aircraft) Ltd., English Electric Aviation Ltd., and Bristol Aircraft Ltd. Shares of the joint company will be held as follows: Vickers 40 percent, English Electric 40 percent, and Bristol 20 percent. Bristol's helicopter interests are not included in the merger, and financial responsibility for types of aircraft and missiles already in production will remain with the principal companies. Negotiations are also taking place for the inclusion of Hunting Aircraft Ltd., aircraft design and manufacturing company of the Hunting Group, in the new company.

Orenda Industrial Activity

Orenda Engines Ltd., Malton, Ont., is developing a small marine diesel engine based on the design of Standard-Triumph, U. K. automobile manufacturers, and to be known as the Orenda-Triumph. News follows a distribution agreement between Orenda Industrial Ltd., subsidiary of Orenda, and Standard-Triumph (Canada) Ltd., under which Orenda will distribute diesel, gasoline and natural gas engines imported from the U. K. It is expected that Orenda will gradually add components of its own manufacture to basic engines built in the U. K.

Gravity Gradiometer Breakthrough

Lundberg Explorations Ltd., Toronto, Ont., claims to have produced the world's first airborne gravity gradiometer, and to have proved its effectiveness in surveys in North and South America and in Africa. The device was demonstrated last month by Dr. Hans Lundberg at a symposium of Arctic geology held in Calgary by the Alberta Assn. of Petroleum Geologists. Gradiometer is said to be so sensitive that it will detect a few million tons of iron ore at a height of 500 feet, and will locate small but potentially worthwhile oil-bearing geologic structures under favourable conditions.

Ferry Conversion for DC-4

Air Charter Ltd., U. K. transport operator running an automobile ferry service between England and the continent, has commissioned the conversion of 10 Douglas DC-4's for use in their operation. To be known as ATL 98, the conversion is being handled by an associate company, Aviation Traders Ltd. Work will include "slicing-off" the fuselage forward of the wings and building on a new nose in which the crew will be accommodated above the hold. Ramp loading will be through a large door in the nose. Company is currently operating Bristol 170 Freighters, but has been looking for a larger replacement. Total cost of the DC-4 and conversion is expected to be around \$350,000.

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