

BRITAIN CALLING



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Although the Government's decision to order 22 Canadair North Stars has naturally not met with approval from all sides, there is general relief that the uncertainty which has beset the Corporations, especially B.O.A.C., for so long is ended. B.O.A.C. is certainly pleased at the decision and, as Mr. Whitney Straight indicated when announcing plans for the reorganization of the Corporation, now that the decision had been made the Corporation can go ahead with confidence.

The Tudor Report

The long-awaited report of the Courtney Committee on the Tudor II, published almost simultaneously with an announcement that trials of the Tudor II had proved unsatisfactory, and Lord Pakenham's statement that the Tudor II was to be abandoned, have aroused much concern. The Tudor Report indicates a state of affairs in British Aviation without precedent and it is almost certain and devoutly to be hoped that the whole system of ordering aircraft for the Corporations will be drastically revised.

The first Report of the Courtney Committee on the Tudor I reflected little credit on any of those concerned and the final report is even more damning.

Delays in the production of the Tudor II are said to have been caused by delay in the testing of the Tudor I, failure to determine financial responsibility (between the Government and B.O.A.C.) and the many changes in requirements imposed by B.O.A.C.

The main reason why estimated performance of the Tudor II did not

come up to expectations was the increase in tare weight, of some 7,650 lb., on an agreed specification in December, 1944 and the 1948 figure. Main causes of the increase were under-estimation of the structure weight on the part of the designer, airworthiness requirements imposed by the Air Registration Board and insistence by B.O.A.C. on standards of passenger and freight accommodation which necessitated increases in the dimensions of the fuselage and in the weights of the fuselage and fittings.

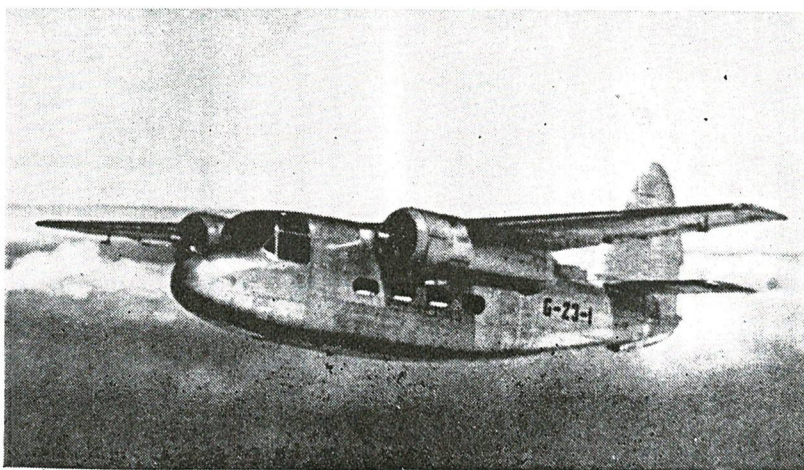
In fact, the history of the Tudor appears to be a history of a complete muddle and irresponsibility on the part of the Corporation and the Government Departments concerned (Ministry of Supply and Ministry of Civil Aviation) B.O.A.C. is not acquitted of vacillation by the Committee, which also noted that there was no direct evidence that the designers opposed suggestions made by the Corporation.

The Report, completed before preliminary results of the tropical trials of the Tudor II were given, suggested that the charge on public funds would be the same whether or not the Tudor II was used; that B.O.A.C. could not reasonably be asked to operate Tudor II's unless it was assured that its financial position would not be worsened, but that the operational and economic qualities of the aircraft might be improved sufficiently for it to be used satisfactorily over all the Empire routes if the tare weight were reduced, flight refuelling were adopted and if B.O.A.C. relaxed the most stringent of its operating conditions.

The Tudor's Future

As Lord Pakenham announced, the Tudor II is to be abandoned and of the 32 aircraft of this type which have been ordered and are nearly completed, 10 are to be converted to Tudor IVs and used as freighters and altogether about 24 would be converted to Tudor IVs, the majority as special pressurized freighters for B.O.A.C. and B.S.A.A. and the rest for experimental purposes. The 10 conversions for which orders have already been given are to be unpressurized.

These conversions of the Tudor II to Tudor IV's are in addition to the 19 Tudor IV's which are almost completed and which are to be used on the main routes of British South American Airways Corporation. In announcing the abandonment of the Tudor II the Government emphasised



The Percival Prince, an eight to ten passenger all-metal transport (Aircraft and Airport, April, 1947), is shown here during one of its initial test flights in England. Powered by two Alvis Leonides engines, the Prince is designed to operate on floats and skis, as well as wheels. Canadian appearance will be in 1949.

that the Tudor IV was an entirely different type which had already been proved. What no one has explained—or even attempted to so far—is why, if the Tudor IVs are suitable for the South American routes of B.S.S.A. they should be considered unsuitable for the Empire routes of B.O.A.C.

For a long time the Government's system of ordering aircraft for the nationalised corporation, which involves two Ministries, the operator and the designers, has been criticized—so much so that some months ago a committee was appointed to inquire into the system. That Committee is about to complete its report which, together with the unhappy Tudor reports, must surely lead to a simpler and more straightforward system involving direct negotiations between operator and maker without all the other hangers-on.

Other Decisions

One surprising decision announced at the same time as the Tudor and Canadairs by the Government, is the

taking over of the big Saunders-Roe SR 45 flying-boats by British South American Airways. Four more of these boats are to be ordered, making a total of seven, which are expected to go into service in 1953.

B.O.A.C. is to replace its flying-boats with landplanes, except perhaps on the South African route and, for some time to come, on routes to Japan. Although flying-boats are popular with passengers, B.O.A.C. has blamed the heavy costs of operating with special bases for the boats which were not used by other airlines as one reason for its heavy operating losses. B.S.A.A. will now have that problem but perhaps South American harbors may prove simpler than those on the Empire routes.

A reorganisation of the Corporation, which it is hoped will make for economy and greater efficiency, has been announced by Mr. Whitney Straight, Chief Executive of B.O.A.C. The main change is two operating divisions instead of three and the maximum possible delegation of authority.

Headquarters in London will be mainly advisory and will consist of six main departments.

An interesting appointment was that of Sir Frank Whittle as adviser to the Corporation on the operation and development of gas turbine engines. The appointment dates from the 21st July and for the time being is an honorary one.

On the operating side the Middle East and African Division of B.O.A.C. has been dropped and the two divisions will now be:—Eastern, responsible for all routes eastward from London to Australasia and Japan; and Western, responsible for all westward routes from London to Australia.

The reorganisation of the Corporation will mean a reduction in staff and already from a total of 23,000 in April, 1947 (the peak), the staff has been reduced to less than 21,000.

B.O.A.C. hopes to take delivery of 15 of its 22 Canadairs within 12 months, with delivery of the first in about eight or nine months. Fifteen are to be used on the Middle East and African routes and the rest on the U.K.-Canada route.

Canadian Welding Bureau Institutes

Course Of Interest To Aircraft Industry

The Canadian Welding Bureau's combined correspondence and lecture course in the fundamentals of welding will not start until the fall, so that as many as possible can start at the beginning. Originally the course was scheduled to start in June. Applications will be received until the fall, but preliminary lessons will be going out shortly.

The Canadian Welding Bureau is a division of the Canadian Standards Association, National Research Building, Ottawa, and in conjunction with the Canadian Welding Society is sponsoring this course to better fit foremen, supervisors, operators, draughtsmen, engineers, and others to fill the advancing needs of Canadian industry and the requirements of CSA standards. Though the course was originally conceived for member firms of the Bureau only, it is now being offered to

all fabricators and individuals who may wish to improve their welding knowledge and opportunities.

Most of the country's welding engineers are participating in the course both in the preparation of material and the lectures, and many others have promised assistance. A large proportion of the work will of course fall upon the Welding Bureau's engineers including the general manager, R. M. Gooderham; W. R. Stickney; G. J. Foster, and Dr. W. H. Simon. To Mr. Gooderham, incidentally goes credit for starting the course.

The lectures are at present planned for Toronto and Montreal only but it is intended that if the numbers taking the course are sufficiently high in any other district arrangements will be made to give these lectures in those districts. The inspecting staff of the Bureau who are constantly touring

the country will give all the help they can in this matter and by this means it is believed that the student in the remoter areas will get similar advantages to those in the large industrial cities of the east.

The fees for the course are as follows. Firms which are sustaining members of the Bureau will get one free allocation of the course for every \$100 of subscription i.e., a firm paying the Bureau \$1,000 a year will have ten free courses to allocate to its employees. By arrangement with these companies, employees over and above the free allocation will be able to take the course at a personal expenditure of \$50, payable through the company. Finally, men wishing to take the course without reference to a sustaining member do so for \$65, payment being in installments.