

AERONAUTICS

# Air Supremacy Struggle

Now confronts aircraft manufacturers of all nations. Even an inland country possessing flying fields or lakes can be formidable competitor in postwar commerce.

► THE PROPOSED purchase of several Martin Mars seaplanes by Swissair, official airline of Switzerland, brings home the reminder that air commerce is not limited to those nations whose place in air shipping has been established, and that even an inland nation possessing flying fields or a lake can be a formidable competitor in postwar commerce. Daily air service between Geneva, Zurich and Paris is to be resumed; reciprocal rights agreement for American and Swiss airlines across the North Atlantic, and Swissair's expected nonstop operations from New York to flying boat bases on Lake Lucerne or Lake Geneva indicate that lack of size, world importance and even geographic locations are not retarding factors in the race for commercial air supremacy. Typical of postwar passenger and cargo planes, the Mars, capable of carrying cargo in excess of 35,000 pounds, can easily fly scheduled nonstop flights from America to Switzerland seating 132 passengers.

That France intends to enter the field is evident by the recent test flight of a six-engine, 40-passenger flying boat, said to be capable of remaining in the air for

periods of 20 hours. One of England's entries, the Avro Tudor, four-engined luxury liner, sleeping 12 passengers, claims a maximum range of 4,660 miles and speed approaching 300 miles per hour. In addition to the Hermes Cargo Carrier, Handley Page has also under construction a 50-passenger transport. The 70-passenger Shetland, having a greater wingspread than the B-29 Superfortress, will be in service as well as the commercial version of the Short Sterling night bomber as an 18-passenger liner.

Before the war, airlines in this country had introduced pressurized cabin planes on scheduled flights at sub-stratosphere altitudes. On the drawing boards of aircraft manufacturers were other ships whose development was all but forgotten in the production of war planes. Republic's first commercial plane, the 40-passenger Rainbow, powered by four Pratt-Whitney engines totaling 12,000 horsepower, is believed by its designers to reach a speed of 400 miles an hour

when put into operation. Lockheed's famed Constellation is already in service, as are Douglas DC-4s, perhaps better known in its Air Transport Command version, C-54. Consolidated-Vultee expects to outperform any ship in the skies with its giant 204-passenger super-clipper on order by Pan American Airways. The 10-passenger helicopter PV-3, built by the P-V Engineering Forum, Inc., landing in a 100-foot-diameter clearing on either land or water, opens new fields for feeder lines into formerly inaccessible areas.

Simple conversion of Consolidated-Vultee's Liberator, Privateer and the new Dominator, together with Boeing's B-29, to peacetime transport will place America easily in the lead without a struggle for new design or drastic engineering changes.

*Science News Letter, October 27, 1945*

The *Shu King*, the oldest known scientific work, states that 2,000 years before the present era, the Chinese determined the seasons, and the positions of the sun at the equinoxes and solstices.

*Peanuts*, formerly produced merely for the edible nuts, are now grown for peanut butter, oil and oil cake; their shells, finely divided and bonded with an adhesive, are used in bottle caps, replacing cork.

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