



Above, Piper Cherokees on the production line at Vero Beach, Florida. Current production rate of the type, which sells for £5,200 in Britain, exceeds three per day

Left, sporting balloonist Fred Dolder of Switzerland last month commemorated Spelterini's 1910 balloon crossing of the Alps by repeating the flight, ascending from Murren. Here the Eiger mountain forms an impressive backdrop to Dolder's "Bernina"

Sport and Business

MERCURY AIRLINES of Manchester Airport have been appointed North of England dealers for Mooney Mk 21 aircraft, the UK distributors for which are R. K. Dundas Aero Ltd, London. Mercury's Mk 21 demonstrator, G-ARTB, was due to be delivered early this month, after a nonstop flight from Boston to Manchester by ferry pilot Walter Moody of Max Conrad Aviation. One of the directors of Mercury Airlines, Mr Geoffrey Wilkinson, was the pilot of the *Flight*-entered, Dundas-owned Mk 21 which came second in its class and third overall in the Royal Aero Club's recent Business and Touring Aircraft Competition at Kidlington. Other directors of the company are Lord and Lady Calthorpe, Capt I. D. Wallace and Capt P. G. Gurdon. The R. K. Dundas company is now negotiating further regional dealerships for the Mooney Mk 21.

A STRONG FRENCH CONTINGENT is expected to attend the Popular Flying Association's international rally at Fairwood Common Airfield, Swansea, this coming weekend (September 9-10). This year's winner of the Masefield Trophy will probably be decided by a fly-off between the McAully and the Armstrong Whitworth groups at the rally.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL Planning Committee rejected on August 25 two applications for the development of a private aerodrome on the site of Blackbushe Airport. The applications, made by AVM Donald Bennett, were for the use of an area of 325 acres as a private aerodrome, and for the erection of aircraft hangars. The vice-chairman of the committee, Lord Porchester, said that the Ministry of Aviation was now supporting AVM Bennett in his attempt to re-open Blackbushe for private flying. The reported reasons for the committee's decision were that most of the land was to be an open space, the proposal would be detrimental to the amenities of Yateley village, and it would interfere with safety and traffic flow on the Basingstoke-London trunk road.

THE ROYAL SWEDISH AERO CLUB has selected the Piper Colt as the standard trainer for use by flying clubs in Sweden, following one-week competitive trials in which the MFI Junior, Morane-Saulnier Rallye and Cessna 150 also participated. An initial order for 30 Colts has been placed. The selection was made by a panel of judges including test pilots, Royal Swedish Air Force inspectors, flying instructors and aviation insurance underwriters; and representatives of 38 Swedish clubs were also given the oppor-

Newly appointed northern-England dealer for the Mooney Mk 21 is Mercury Airlines of Manchester. A second demonstrator is due to join the Dundas-owned G-ARNA here illustrated (see news-item on this page)

tunity to fly the aircraft. Auxiliary fuel tanks, increasing the capacity to 36 gal and the cruising range to 648 miles, are specified for the 30 Colts on order. Deliveries are scheduled to begin in mid-September.

BEECHCRAFT QUEEN AIRS numbered 100, 101 and 102 have been purchased for executive and engineering personnel use by Lockheed Missiles and Space Company, Sunnyvale, California. Average stage length will be 100-500 miles, with an average of six passengers plus crew of two.

NEW ZEALAND'S AERIAL-WORK INDUSTRY is considering introducing a special agricultural pilot's licence for such occupations as aerial spraying, crop-dusting and fencing. The licence will replace the commercial pilot's certificate at present required by the Civil Aviation Administration for such pilots and, according to Mr. R. K. Garnham, President of the New Zealand Aviation Industry Association, will enforce higher qualifications for several aspects of agricultural aerial work.

Aimed at increasing safety in agricultural flying—New Zealand still has the lowest topdressing accident rate in the world, despite five fatal crashes in five weeks earlier in the year—the licence will be the first official standard set specifically for agricultural pilots. Topdressing schools operate at Wanganui and in Southland and these schools, or perhaps a special Government Air College (as recommended by the Inspector of Accidents, Wg Cdr O. J. O'Brien), will train pilots for the agricultural licence if it is enforced. A special committee is at present studying the licence proposals before making recommendations to the Government and the industry.

IT IS REPORTED from New Zealand that the Bennett Airtruck (550 h.p. Pratt & Whitney R1340) has flown 130hr and completed its trials. Issue of a Certificate of Airworthiness is subject to Civil Aviation Administration satisfaction with the results of the trials. Designed by Mr Luigi Pellarini, the Airtruck is an all-metal agricultural aircraft of unconventional appearance, incorporating a number of features of the Australian PL-7 designed in 1955 by Mr Pellarini for Kingsford Smith Aviation Service.

FOUR AERO COMMANDER 500B executive aircraft have been sold to the International Co-operation Administration for use by the Presidents of four African republics—the Ivory Coast, Niger, Dahomey and Upper Volta.

Champions at the recent USSR sporting parachuting competitions at Vladimir included (from the left) V. Raevsky, G. Mukhina, I. Solovyeva, V. Guryashina, L. Krasilnikov, F. Soldadze and I. Luzanin

