



## Air News

By John W. R. Taylor

### New Naval Jet

The Supermarine 525 sweptwing jet fighter, illustrated above, made its first flight on 6th May last. It has been described as the fastest and most powerful aircraft ever designed to operate from aircraft carriers. No details are available, except that it is a single-seater, powered by two Rolls-Royce Avon turbojets.

It is about a year since the Admiralty announced that they had ordered a substantial number of twin-jet sweptwing fighters developed from the Supermarine 508, which had "straight" wings and a "butterfly" V-tail. The new Type 525 is not the final production version, but almost certainly gives a good impression of what the Royal Navy's new fighter will look like.

### Pennyfarthing Flies to France

To celebrate the 80th anniversary of the first crossing of the English Channel by a British cyclist, Alfred Nuttall of Leeds travelled to France recently with his pennyfarthing bicycle. But whereas his predecessor went by boat, Mr. Nuttall crossed the easy way, by Silver City Air Ferry.

Dressed in the style of the 1870s, he mounted his 5 ft. high machine at Ashford in Kent, cycled nine miles to Lympne Airport and made the 20 min. air crossing. After a 40-mile ride to the scene of the Battle of Agincourt, he flew back to England.

### Flight Refuelling News

The U.S.A.F. have placed an order for nearly £6,000,000 worth of mid-air refuelling equipment with Flight Refuelling Inc., the American subsidiary of Sir Alan Cobham's Flight Refuelling Ltd. The British Air Ministry too is showing renewed interest in the technique, and has supported recent tests in which a Valiant bomber has been refuelled in flight

The Supermarine 525 sweptwing jet fighter, which made its first flight on 6th May last, piloted by Lt. Cmdr. M. J. Lithgow. Photograph by courtesy of Vickers-Armstrongs Ltd.

by a Canberra tanker. Later, tests may be made with the other British "V" bombers, the Victor and Vulcan, to increase still further their already exceptional range and bomb load.

Main problem is to increase the speed and height at which the operation can be carried out. At present, the best achieved in Britain is 310 m.p.h. at 32,000 ft., but tests have been made in America at about 460 m.p.h., which is equivalent to 70 per cent. of the speed of sound at 35,000 ft.

### More Super Connies at London

More and more of the new and longer Lockheed Model 1049 Super Constellation air liners are beginning to call at London Airport. The first ones, in the insignia of K.L.M. and Air France, were seen several months ago. Now Trans-Canada Air Lines and Air-India International have both begun services linking their homelands to Britain with "Super Connies".

One of the passengers on the first T.C.A. service was Mr. J. A. D. McCurdy, who was officially the first man in the British Empire to fly a heavier-than-air machine. The date was 1909, the place Nova Scotia, and the aircraft his own *Silver Dart*, which completed well over 200 successful flights in America and Canada.

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Two, or perhaps three, Vickers Viscount turboprop air liners may be bought soon to replace the veteran piston-engined Vikings of the Queen's Flight, which have been in service for nearly eight years. They will cost about £300,000 each.

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This year, for the first time, the airlines are earning more money than railways in the United States. It is air travel's second major record in successive years, for during 1953 more people crossed the Atlantic by air than by steamship.



Trans-Canada Air Lines' first Lockheed 1049 Super Constellation taxiing on the tarmac at London Airport.