



# AIR PICTORIAL

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**COVER: HB-AAH, the second of four Handley Page Model 210 Heralds for Globe Air AG, the Swiss charter company based at Basle. Herald orders at present total forty-two, of which thirty-six are for export**

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## TSR-2

WITH THE Labour Government's decision to cancel TSR-2, despite all the arguments in favour of the aircraft, certain facts should be re-stated. TSR-2 was produced to an R.A.F. requirement which has never yet been officially amended, superseded or declared redundant. TSR-2 has passed its preliminary trials with success and could, say its makers, be put into R.A.F. service without any major modification. BAC have therefore "delivered the goods" and the R.A.F. could consequently be equipped with an aircraft which, by virtue of its specification, is better than any other type in the world.

There remains the question of cost. The total bill for 150 TSR-2s, including development, spares, etc., was said by Labour to be £750 million. This estimate has since been reduced, in agreement with B.A.C., to £640 million. Mr. Denis Healey, Defence Minister, said on 6th April that he had an option on the American F-111A which would save £300 million. If the same number of F-111s is involved, then in our opinion it is utterly impossible for them to be equipped with anything comparable to the all-weather automatic terrain-following and reconnaissance equipment planned for the TSR-2. It could not be done at the price, even if the F-111A were physically able to contain such equipment, which it is not.

But the matter goes far beyond TSR-2. With it there disappears the last of the three major British projects upon which the future of the R.A.F. itself depended. Our respected contemporary *The Navy*, in its March issue, refers to "... What has now become the paramount question for the future of our armed forces: do we any longer require a separate Air Force?" Such drastic scrapping of aircraft to R.A.F. requirements inevitably raises most serious doubts about Government intentions concerning the future of the Service; and grave concern lest the bad advice which has resulted in the disappearance of the TSR-2, the P.1154, and the H.S.681 may also lead to the disappearance of the R.A.F. itself.

In all these arguments, as we remarked in our March issue, the one voice that we have not heard is that of the R.A.F. itself. Ministerial decisions have not always been right ones, or conveyed in adequately explained terms. The infamous Duncan Sandys Defence White Paper of 1957 led us to believe that there was no future for manned aircraft; that the reasons for this theory were inadequate was borne out by the R.A.F.'s strong and successful reaction, most of which went on behind the scenes.

If certain pre-war Ministers had had their way, there would have been no Hurricane and no Spitfire. Both aircraft were designed as private ventures, and in the latter case the then Chairman of Vickers-Armstrongs made it quite clear that there was to be no ministerial "interference" until after the Spitfire had flown to the manufacturer's satisfaction. Unfortunately, present economics now make it impossible for even the largest British firms such as BAC and Hawker Siddeley, who know far more about designing and building military aircraft than any Government organisation, to contemplate a private venture.

We are not convinced that the R.A.F.'s opinions and those of the great aircraft manufacturers have had full weight. If they have, these considerations should be made public, and the public itself reassured.

### THE AIR BALL

THE AIR BALL, in aid of the Air League, will take place on Tuesday, 25th May, at the Dorchester with Lady Aitken as Chairman of the Ball.

Dancing will be to Bill Savill's Band and Russ Henderson's Steel Band. Tickets, price £3 10s. each, inclusive of dinner, are obtainable from Mrs. Madge Clarke, 51 Harrington Gardens, Kensington, S.W.7 (Tel. Fremantle 2285).