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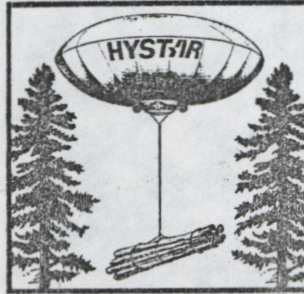
green-covered Commentary (in
three volumes) in cupboards,

£30 a week for a room out of his
£51-54-a-week student grant.

wreckage of broken glass and
furniture and smashed doors.

Saucer takes a spin

When Prince Charles opens Expo '86, Vancouver's world fair, tomorrow he will be invited to fly a "flying saucer". John Dudman describes the space fantasy that has become a sudden reality.



The backwoods flyer

IT MAY be difficult to believe a "flying saucer" that might have starred in a Hollywood space epic does actually work. It flies straight up, straight down, sideways, in circles and spins on its own vertical axis, and can perform, if required, a sort of aerial square dance.

Credulity is stretched further in discovering that it had its origins in the Canadian backwoods.

Its champion George Ninkovich, 48, president of Hystar Aerospace Development Corporation of Vancouver, explained: "I was originally in the timber business. The good trees disappeared from accessible areas 40 years ago. The good wood that remained grew in places high up — on cliff tops for instance. I was determined to bring it down."

So he recruited aircraft engi-

neers and designers to study the possibilities of logging in remote places from the air. Helicopters, barrage balloons and airships were all considered.

Then, using the latest vertical take-off technology, Dale Kramer, 33, a Toronto designer, produced a cylindrical-shaped saucer with a pilot cabin fitted underneath and a revolutionary control system using either propellers or ducted fans.

Everyone was amazed at the strange but familiar shape. "But I said I didn't care if it looked like a table so long as it worked," said Ninkovich.

By using a cable with a remote controlled hook or grab the Hyster, hovering over the

British Columbian forest where trees rise well over 100 feet, can lift heavy logs from one operating site to another.

The uses for this aircraft have spread far from the backwoods. Ninkovich is promoting four types from the remote-controlled version to a one-man "flying saucer" and on to bigger machines with diameters of 115 feet and a height of 46 feet, plus a weight carrying ability of 15,000 lbs.

The mini-flying saucer with its gleaming white laminated skin will be used for indoor demonstrations. Besides being shown at Expo '86 it will also perform at next September's Farnborough Air Show. The bigger aircraft will have a range of uses including being a platform for television crews and monitoring oil, gas and power lines over the sub-zero wastes and forests of northern Canada or for seed spraying over farmland.

And just how does the Hystar handle? "Listen," said Ninkovich, his eyes twinkling with enthusiasm. "You could learn to fly it solo in six hours. Why not try? It's so easy."

One wonders what Prince Charles's verdict will be if he takes up the challenge.

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