'Flying Saucer' Comes True

By WILLIAM STEVENSON
Air Mail from Ottawa

HIGHLY secret reports of a Canadian "flying saucer" are circulating among British and U.S. defence scientists.

Inquiries in Ottawa and in Britain indicate that the craft is designed to take-off vertically, fly horizontally at around 1,500 m.p.h., and make use of the gyroscopic effect of a revolving power plant to acquire stability.

A wooden "mock-up" of the craft is reported to lie behind tarpaulin screens in Avro Canada's experimental hangar at Malton, to which only holders of "super-security" cards are admitted.

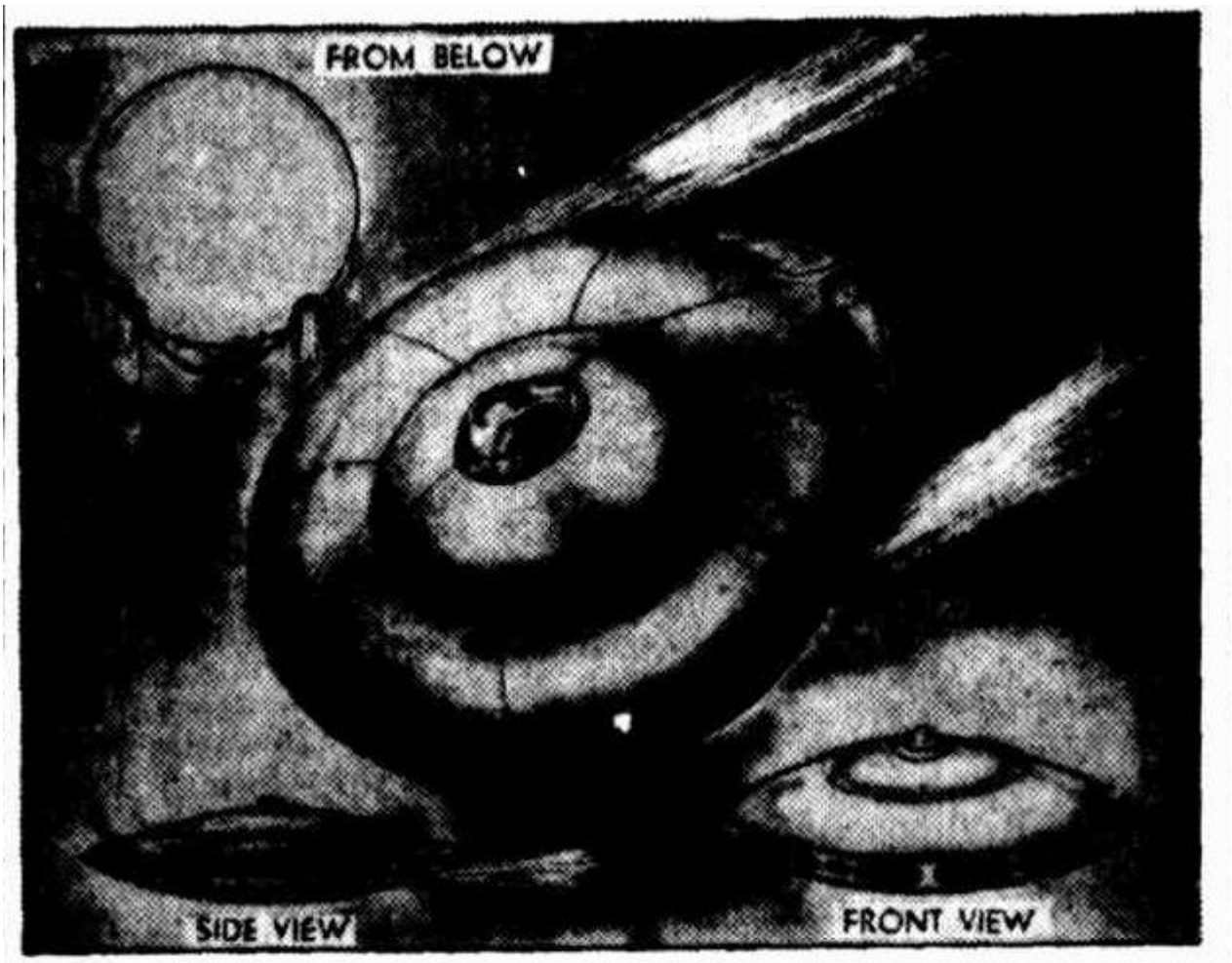
No project of this kind is known to be under development elsewhere in the western world. But reports have been so persistent concerning the Canadian craft that western scientists must consider the possibility that Russia has carried similar development to an even more advanced stage.

Blueprints of the Canadian craft were reported from London this month to have been studied by the British Air Ministry. An engineer, identified as "chief of an Avro Canada design team," was stated to have submitted plans some weeks ago.

Such an engineer, a young Englishman working now at Malton on original aircraft design, flew to Britain recently on a top-secret mission.

Officials at the A. V. Roe plant have disclaimed all knowledge of the project, but it may be remembered that similar official denials accompanied early reports of the Avro Canada CF-104, a delta-wing fighter now known to await Government approval.

"This craft is o revolution-



An artist's conception of the "flying saucer" that is being built in Canada.

ary," one Air Ministry official admitted in London, "that if it flies everything now in the air becomes obsolete."

A top British aviation authority described the craft as "coming closest to what everyone is looking for—a warplane independent of runways or carriers because it takes off vertically, and is still able to fly at terrific speed."

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TWO years will be needed to put a prototype "saucer" in the air, a Canadian Government scientist has reported. He said: "The R.A.F. is very keen on the project and has suggested that Canada should see it through to final development. It contains so many revolutionary features that the cost may be very high, but it would clinch Canadian prestige in the scientific world."

So much secrecy surrounds the project that Canadian Defence Research Board officials consider it "much too hot to handle." But it is known that Dr. O. M. Solandt, chairman of the board, is urging the Government to finance construction of a prototype

construction of a prototype model.

This description of the project has been obtained from reliable British sources:

The pilot sits in a plastic "bubble"; a gas-turbine engine of unconventional design revolves around him several hundred times a minute; and the "saucer's rim" remains stationary. Air is sucked through inlets on the rim's forward surfaces, and blasts of hot air are ejected through combustion chambers along the remaining perimeter and out of the "tail"—a flat surface to the rear which is the craft's only control.

The swiftly revolving engine gives the craft a gyroscopic stability so great that, according to reports, the design team had difficulty in devising control methods.

Because of its almost circular shape, the craft is described as having diameter rather than wing-span, measuring some 40ft across. Few other details are available, although the principle is described as "so darn simple, it sounds silly."

Another report adds that the craft would be capable of making 180-degree turns without changing altitude.

Descriptions so far available suggest that the Canadian craft would display in flight the characteristics credited to "flying saucers," reports on which have been under investigation by the U.S. Air Force.

U.S. Air Force.

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THE Canadian project clearly offers a possible answer to the growing problem of bases for high-speed jet planes.

All over the free world, designers have been seeking a method of leaving the ground vertically as with a helicopter, but without the helicopter's speed limitations. Stanley Hiller, brilliant young U.S. designer of helicopters, has produced blueprints for a rocket-plane which would use a tripod of auxiliary rocket units to force itself into the air vertically, and would then turn through 90 degrees and gain forward speed on its main jet engines.

A more practical design is the Bell X-5, built at Buffalo and using adjustable wings which, forward for take-off, make a short run possible, but when pulled back give the swept-wing effect necessary for supersonic speeds.

The nearest thing to the Canadian project is a scale-model "saucer" built by Dr. Eugene Kay, of Glendale, California. It is a 41in aluminium disc with slotted vanes like fan blades. These vanes spin around the motor.

The Canadian "saucer," instead of gaining flying speed by a swiftly rotating "wing," would use direct thrust by its jets to get off the ground. One report says that a tripod under-carriage will assist the launching, but will be left behind, so that the craft will land

hind, so that the craft will land again on its "belly."