

'Flying Saucer' Comes Through First Trial

LONDON, Monday (A.A.P.-Reuter).—Britain's first "flying saucer" flew yesterday. It made three flights, each of about half an hour, and hovered about 1 ft. from the ground.

For the first time it was tethered in a yard at the works of its builders, Saunders-Roe Ltd., at Cowes, Isle of Wight.

During the second it was untethered in flight.

For the last it took off untethered.

Mr. R. Stanton-Jones, chief designer of Saunders-Roe Ltd., said "It came absolutely up to expectations. We got from the machine exactly what we had hoped for."

The announcement was made jointly last night by Saunders-Roe Limited and the National Research Development Corporation.

The hovercraft—half aircraft and half ship—is a saucer-shaped vehicle designed to skim across the sea on a cushion of air.

a CUSHION OF AIR.

Tests on the hovercraft have been proceeding at the Saunders-Roe headquarters on the Isle of Wight, southern England. The prototype, designed to carry two people, is powered by a 450 horsepower engine which drives a ducted fan to provide the air for lift and propulsion.

It is 30ft. long and 24ft. wide.

The principle of the vehicle is for the fan to make an air cushion which lifts the hovercraft and enables it to ride between three and 7ft. above the water.

Some of the air is then bled off to propel the craft forward.

Pilot and passenger sit in a cabin on top of the 'Saucer' and ahead of the engine, which is set in a tower.

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It is believed that the hovercraft—S.R.N. 1—which flew yesterday, weighs two tons and can move 3ft. above the water at speeds of up to 40 m.p.h.

The Daily Express quoted test pilot Peter Lamb as saying "It was easy and I discov-

ered it was a marvellous thing to fly."

A huge form of the hovercraft may be used as a passenger and vehicle ferry across the English Channel.

Studies are said to have shown that craft weighing thousands of tons and capable of speeds of about 100 knots are possible—with the advantage that they can be loaded and serviced on land, making expensive port facilities unnecessary.

The first operational craft will probably weight less than 100 tons. The hovercraft principle was invented by Mr. Christopher Cockerall, a 48-year-old Suffolk boat-builder, who began work on the project six years ago.

Mr. Cockerall was quoted by The Daily Mail as saying yesterday that the men behind the saucer had almost run out of cash.

OUT OF CASH.

Only big money from British backers could stop America from snapping up the inventions, the newspapers said.

Mr. Cockerall said the project could continue only "two or three months" without backing. "We ought to have a team four times the size of the present one, if we could raise the money," he said.

The newspaper said at least five giant American companies were ready with the cash now.