

Transatlantic Bomber Plans Stolen, Found

Pratt-1/15/40
Recovery Spotlights

U. S. Construction of Largest Warplane

By the Associated Press

The Army airplane plans which recently were stolen, but recovered, were for a secret new bomber which will be the world's largest, it was learned authoritatively last night.

The plane itself, a craft of more than 70 tons believed capable of a round-trip nonstop Atlantic flight, is nearing completion at the Santa Monica, Calif., plant of the Douglas Aircraft Co., and will be given its first tests next summer.

The fact that plans for an Army plane had been stolen but recovered by "G-men" was disclosed last week with publication of testimony by J. Edgar Hoover, chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to a Congressional committee.

Hoover did not identify the plane, but authoritative sources said it was this huge experimental bomber, on which Air Corps and commercial engineers have been working for 18 months.

At least one foreign government was said to be interested in obtaining the stolen designs.

Aviation men understand the plane has a wing spread of more than 200 feet, and is equipped with new model high-powered motors which promise a range of 6,000 or possibly 7,000 miles.

Its reported weight of more than 70 tons compares with 41½ tons for the Atlantic Clipper which can carry 45 passengers. Its wingspread compares with 138 feet for the Douglas DC-4, huge airliner first tried out last summer and capable of carrying 42 passengers and a crew of five.

The Air Corps' largest regular service craft weighs 17 tons, although it has a single 32-ton plane, the B-15, in service on an experimental basis.

Hoover's disclosure of the stolen plans was in support of the Administration's emergency defense funds, which included provision for extra F. B. I. operatives. He said proper safeguards had not been taken to prevent their theft.