

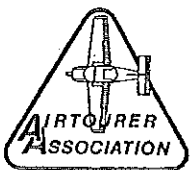
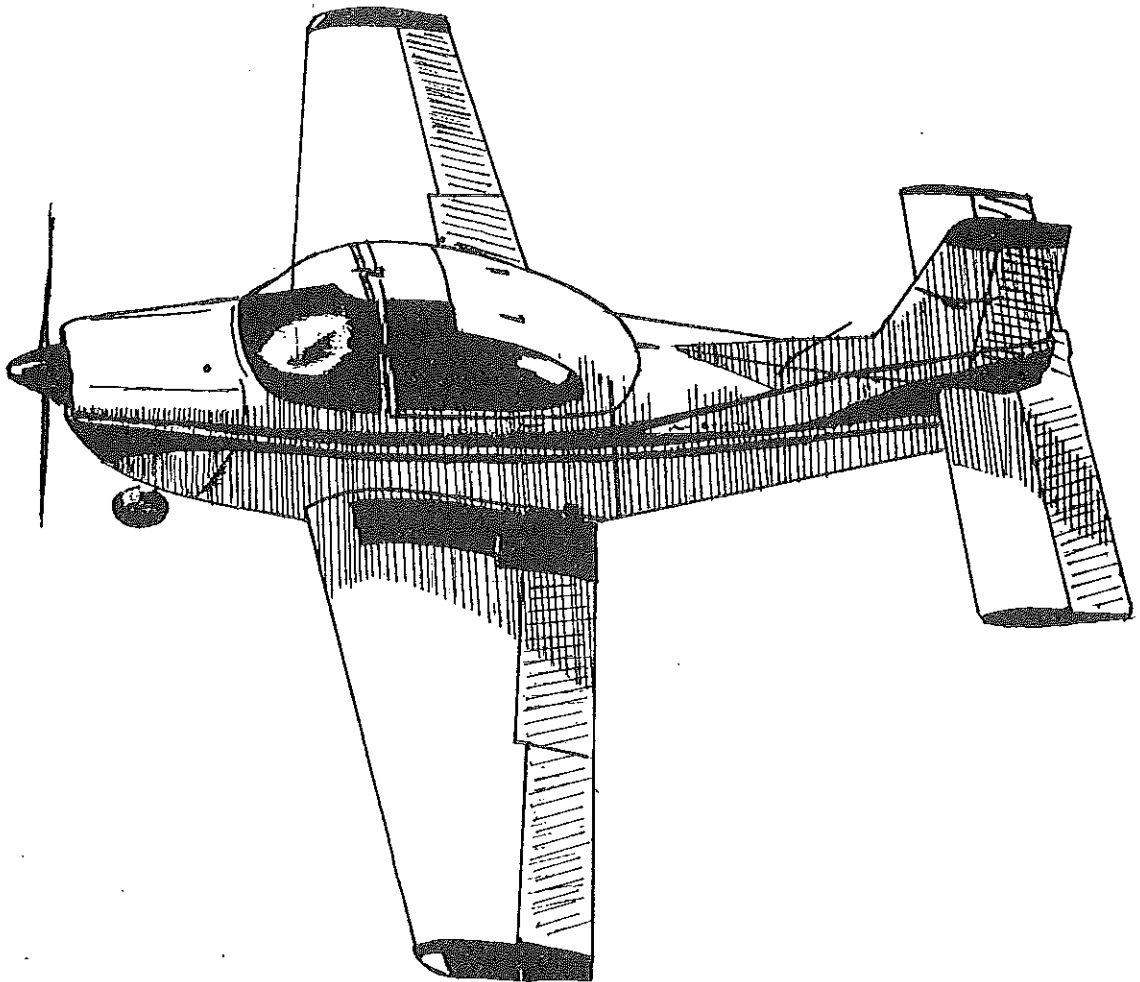
AIRTOURER ASSOCIATION

NOVEMBER, 1988

NEWSLETTER No. 48

PATRON:- *Dr. HENRY K. MILLICER (AIRTOURER-DESIGNER)*

Dedicated to the preservation and continued airworthiness of VICTA and A.E.S.L. Airtourer Series Aircraft.



NEWSLETTER

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"YARRANDALE REPORT 1988"

Sonny and Betty turned on fabulous weather and flying conditions at Yarrandale once again this year. Betty always makes the Airtourers so welcome, and I'd just like to say thankyou to her on behalf of all the Airtourers, especially the female contingent.

We missed one or two Sydney faces this time, but still the line-up of 20 looked very small in the early morning sunshine. Lets hope there will be lots more at the Leeton.A.G.M. in 1989.

The new members name tags look really good, and we hope that Rick will have organised many more before he gets promoted to his mahogany wings in Canberra next year.

On a personal note, our thanks to all who took the trouble to enquire about Tony's health and progress. He is almost back to 100% fit, and I have difficulty in restraining him !

Here's hoping we'll all meet again in Leeton.

Best Wishes,

Liz

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YARRANDALE ATTENDANCE

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VH-MRZ	VH-SHR
VH-MKL	VH-MVR
VH-BQK	VH-MOH
VH-IOF	VH-CTM
VH-CND	VH-KHP
VH-MOI	VH-MTL
VH-RQL	VH-CRK
VH-MVI	VH-MUL
VH-MTI	VH-MRL
VH-MRF	VH-MUX
VH-EQA	

After reading the article in the last Newsletter re VH-BWI going to Moorabbin Air Museum all I could think of was "What a shame, what is an Airtourer doing in a Museum"?

Julian Johnson once said "Airtourers were not designed to be parked."

How right he is.

Editor.

FOXTROT MICKEY MOUSE

APRIL 10th 1959

We waved our children off to school, loaded the baby in her basket into the car, climbed in ourselves and set off to drive from Laverton to Moorabbin. As we left some Sabres were making a low sweep over the airfield; Randall would not be with them today; he was on his way to take a new plane on its first flight. The Australian Airtourer prototype VH FMM would take to the air for the first time.

Quite a crowd had assembled at Moorabbin and as I mingled with them I could see photographers, reporters and D.C.A. officials. This was to be the first step in a long program towards the granting of C of A to the little plane.

Randall had disappeared into the hanger, ladies were preparing refreshments in a large tent, our baby was asleep on my shoulder as I made my way to a vantage point to watch proceedings.

All eyes were on FMM as the team proudly wheeled it into position; a gleaming yellow and white bird, poised and ready in the morning sun. Randall in his flying gear and hard hat was helped up over the wing and into the cockpit. My knees were beginning to feel a little weak. Just at that moment Henry Millicer joined me, took the baby in his arms and said cheerfully, "Do not worry Lorraine, it will fly, I know that it will fly, I am quite confident." how right he was !

Together we stood and watched that lovely little plane take off, climb, bank, turn and circle for some twenty minutes, then with a proud pass over the field it came in for a perfect landing.

There were cheers and smiles and, yes, maybe a tear or two.

The team gathered round, eager with questions - -

"How'd she go, Randy ?"

"What d'you reckon ?"

To their great delight he replied ,

"It's just like a bought one !"

Lorraine Green.



'Its just like a
BOUGHT ONE'

R. GREEN.

RICHMOND BI-CENTENNIAL AIR SHOW

On 12th October when I knew finally that five Airtourers namely MUY, MRE, RSJ, MOH and JVV had finally made it to the greatest show on earth, I gave one huge sigh of relief.

Our simple display gave little hint of the efforts made by certain Association members to put the aircraft in place.

I will leave you to enjoy elsewhere the publications which will no doubt record the success of the main event and the many displays that took place over the five days.

However I must record the efforts of the small select band who assisted me greatly with our own static display.

First and foremost Harry Couzin who was his normal tower of strength. Without Harry's local knowledge and connections with the Schofields Flying Club we would have been still battling. For example, as all rights to provide food and drinks at Richmond has been contracted to specialists, we would have been unable to cater for our members at cost if H.C. hadn't smuggled in grog, soft drink, ice etc at 6-30am on the Saturday morning right under the watchful eyes of the R.A.A.F. base guard. We only needed to carry in ice for Sunday. Harry attended most days and really enjoyed driving 30 odd star pickets with Stuart and I in the heat on the Tuesday. Thanks again Harry.

Equal first and foremost I pay tribute to Stuart Hilsberg who not only drove all the way from the deep southern land together with utility and trailer but who then produced from therein four large demountable timber display stands (manufactured I understand under the watchful eye of his look-alike father Ron) upon which were mounted Airtourer photographs, articles and other historical memorabilia dear to all our hearts. Many of the show crowd paused to survey Stuart's handiwork with interest.

S.H. also assisted us greatly by attending on each day, helping to assemble and finally dismantle our creation before heading back home to Kerry who unfortunately couldn't make the trip.

John Hannan was ever present and helpful and provided the top class signs which showed particulars of each aircraft.

In two long days I learned to drive the Aeroplane Jelly truck with the distinctive number plate JELLY. Thanks to Hugh Knox, we had the loan of this vehicle at no cost, to transport furniture and equipment to and from the Airshow. Some of the gear was kindly loaned by my Sport Aircraft Club at Wedderburn. Hugh also assisted personally in many ways and along with Fred Teiffel ferried aircraft to and from Bankstown.

Without the Airtourers we would not have had a display so many thanks to Peter Roche, Ron Stiebel, Lindsay Dyer, Doug Stott, Julian Johnson, John Hannan, Vin Thomas and their friends who made available and piloted their machines to the Airshow on our behalf. Julian casually made another of his Darwin to Sydney flights in the process.

To all the other good people who answered the call of duty and especially to the ladies who provided cakes and goodies - great work and thanks again.

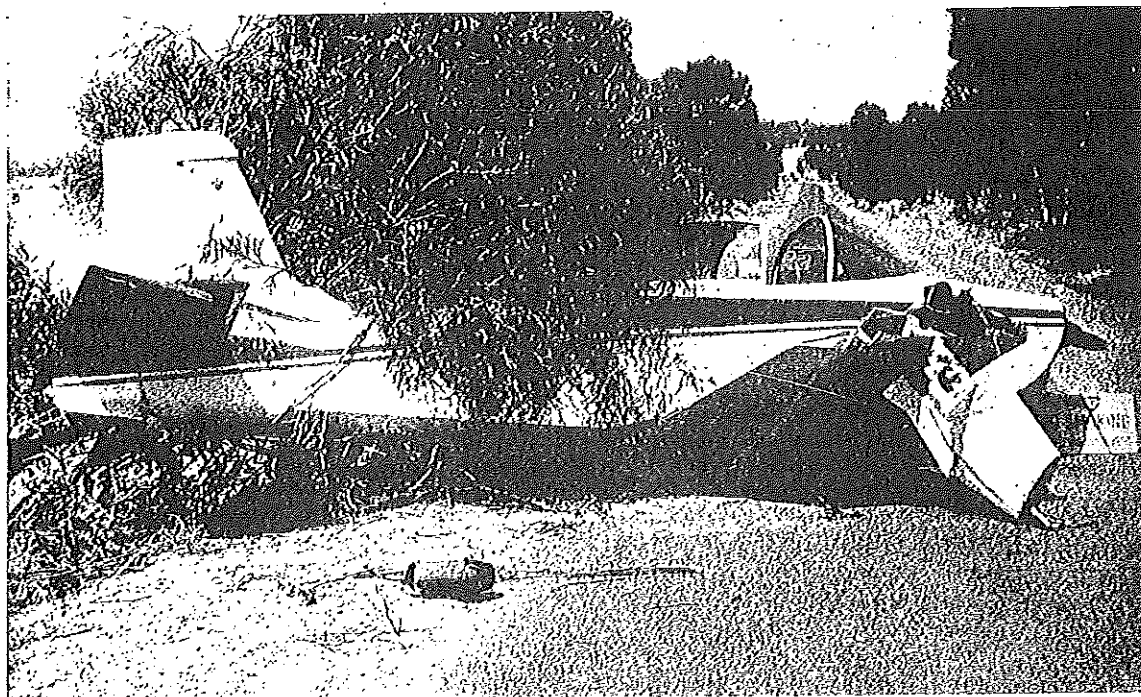
It was pleasing to see Airtourer visitors from afar such as John Mulheron who came all the way from W.A. together with many others. Leonie typed letters, carried heavy things and 'smiled' throughout the whole bit in spite of my variable temperament and events that were very trying at times.

We were within budget thanks to contributions from quite a few.

Based on what we've learnt we will be in fine shape to organise a display at the Tri-Centennial Airshow. I'll only be 159 - any other takers?

See you in Canberra in December.

John Plummer.



THE WRONG KNOB — AGAIN?

During a final approach to land while conducting circuit training at Narrogin West, Western Australia, the pilot of a Victa Airtourer saw that the aircraft was undershooting and attempted to apply power. The engine failed to respond however, and the aircraft landed in a field short of the aerodrome. Although the pilot escaped uninjured, the aircraft was badly damaged as it ran through a fence and struck trees. The engine was undamaged in the crash, and when examined and tested later, was found to function normally.

The pilot, who held a restricted private licence, had flown the aircraft from Jandakot to Narrogin West the previous day. The flight was intended as one of the solo navigation exercises required for the removal of the area restriction on the pilot's licence. After remaining overnight at Narrogin West, the pilot planned to carry out some circuit practice at the aerodrome during the morning and to continue his navigational exercise back to Jandakot in the afternoon.

The aircraft had been refuelled before being hangered for the night at Narrogin West and in the morning, in preparation for his day's flying, the pilot carried out a thorough pre-flight inspection, including a fuel drain check. The fuel sample drained off was normal and contained no water or sediment.

The engine started without any difficulty and

after the pilot had taxied out, it performed satisfactorily during the run-up made before taking-off. During the take-off itself, the engine appeared to be operating normally at full power, and the pilot climbed the aircraft to 1,000 feet as he began a left hand circuit of the aerodrome.

The circuit continued normally and after completing the base leg and turning on to final approach, the pilot saw that the aircraft was high and tending to overshoot, so he went to apply carburettor heat, closed the throttle fully, and lowered full flap. As the aircraft descended the engine seemed to be idling normally. At a height of about 150 feet, while gliding at 70 knots, the pilot saw that the aircraft was now undershooting slightly and he opened the throttle a little to adjust his descent path. There was no response from the engine.

WANTED TO BUY

Victa Airtourer either 115 or 150 hp in good condition, with reasonable hours to run on engine and prop.
Phone Bruce Martin (03) 857 6566.

The pilot closed and opened the throttle and checked that the fuel cock and pump were both turned on, but the engine remained dead. He then began a turn to the left in an attempt to reach a clear area but, realising that his remaining height and speed were insufficient to complete the manoeuvre safely, he decided to land straight ahead in the only area available to him.

The aircraft touched down on open ground in a paddock, but then bounced across an open drain and crashed through a fence separating the paddock from a road that crossed the aircraft's path at right angles. After colliding with trees on the verge of the road it finally came to rest with both wings dislodged and the port and nose undercarriage legs torn off.

The pilot, who was wearing a full harness comprising lap and shoulder straps was uninjured and immediately tried to open the cockpit canopy, but found it was jammed. Fearing the aircraft might catch fire, he quickly turned off the fuel, the ignition switches and the master switch and returned the controls on the instrument sub-panel to their closed positions. Bracing his foot against the crash pad above the instrument panel, the pilot was then able to gain enough leverage to force the canopy back sufficiently to climb out.

* * *

A detailed examination of the engine and carburettor was not possible at the accident site because of the difficulty of removing the cowlings from beneath the engine. After the aircraft had been returned by road to Jandakot however, a full inspection of the engine and fuel system was carried out.

No fault could be found in either the ignition or fuel systems, nor in the engine controls. The engine started easily and idled normally. A run-

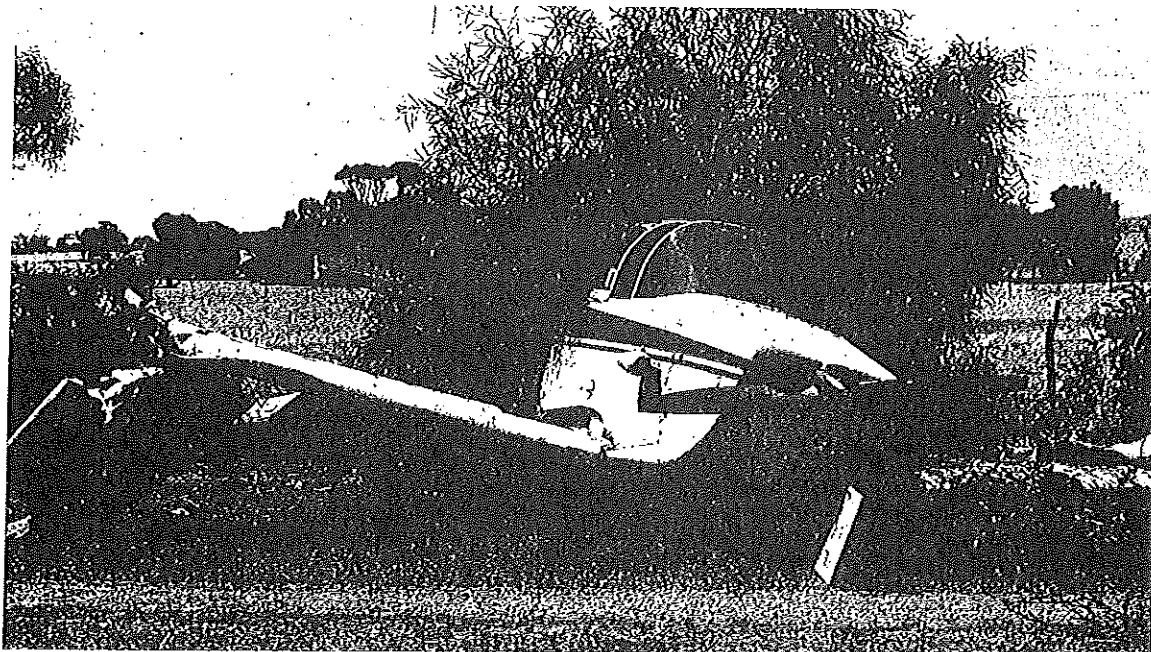
up when the engine was warm produced no evidence of any malfunction and it responded well to rapid throttle openings from idling speed.

Although the pilot believed it was the carburettor heat control that he had pulled out at the time he closed the throttle on final approach to land, he said later that he could not be certain this control knob was extended when the aircraft came to rest. The pilot said his only thought at this time was to get out of the aircraft in case it caught fire, and he had quickly pushed in whatever knobs were extended at the same time as he turned off the fuel and switches.

Because of this, together with the fact that no fault could be found in the engine, it seemed that the engine failure could have been the result of mishandling and the possibilities were examined. In the Victa aircraft, as the photograph of the instrument panel on page 18 shows, the control knobs for carburettor heat, cabin heat and fuel mixture are similar in appearance and are located in close proximity to one another. The mixture control differs from the other two to the extent that it is red in colour instead of black and, being separated from them by the engine starter handle, is probably less likely to have been pulled in mistake for the carburettor heat knob. Had the pilot done so however, the flow of fuel to the engine would have immediately been cut off at the carburettor and the engine would have ceased to deliver power. But with the propeller windmilling, this fact would not have been evident to the pilot until he attempted to apply power by opening the throttle.

A more likely error in the Victa Airtourer would be to mistake the cabin heat control for carburettor heat. The knobs of these two controls are side by side and both being black and the same in size, are identical in appearance. Their only distinguishing

View of the wrecked aircraft with the paddock in which the pilot was forced to land visible in the background. Although both mainplanes were dislodged in the accident, the engine and propeller were undamaged.



Ross Bateup knows of an Airtourer with 400 hours to run for sale.
Anyone interested please contact Ross.

feature are the placards gummed to the bottom of the instrument panel immediately above the respective knobs. An inexperienced pilot taking a hasty glance at the instrument panel could easily confuse the two black knobs and apply cabin heat instead of carburettor heat.

The aircraft was at a height of almost 1,000 feet when the throttle was closed, and had descended to about 150 feet when the pilot attempted to apply power during the final approach leg. The throttle was therefore closed throughout a height loss of nearly 900 feet. As well as this the weather at the time, with a shade temperature of 60 degrees F and a relative humidity of 61.5 per cent, was particularly conducive to carburettor icing. In these circumstances there would be a strong possibility of carburettor icing having developed during the descent if carburettor heat were not applied during this period. Thus, if the pilot had selected cabin heat in mistake for carburettor heat, it is possible that carburettor icing could have been responsible for the engine failure.

Because no fault could be found in the engine and the pilot was not able to recall the precise sequence of events that led to the accident, the cause could not be positively determined. The circumstances of the accident nevertheless strongly suggest that the pilot mishandled the engine controls while on final approach. This is by no means the first accident in

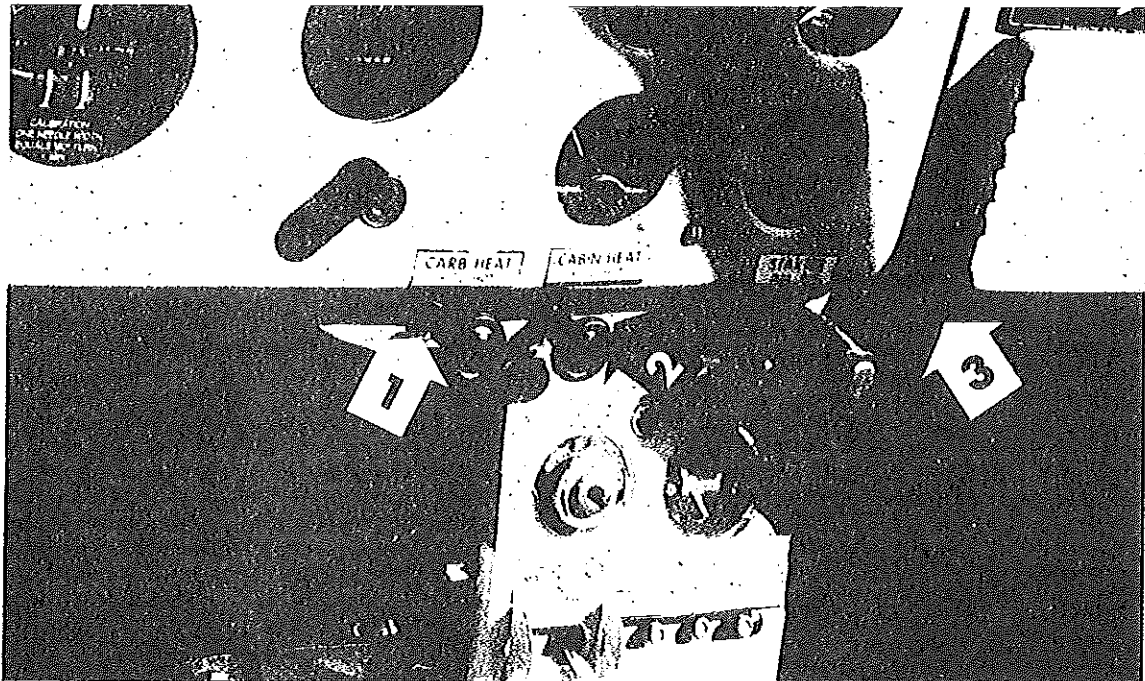
Australia in recent years, in which an accident has resulted from apparent engine failure, but no fault could subsequently be found in the engine. In all such cases, though no actual cause of the accident could finally be established, the evidence of the investigation strongly indicated that the loss of power had resulted from mishandling of the engine controls. Other, similar, accidents have occurred to light aircraft overseas, some of which have definitely been ascribed to the pilot operating the mixture control in mistake for the carburettor heat control.

In the light of this past experience, this latest accident should serve to underline the care and clear thinking that pilots need to exercise when flying any type of aircraft in which the ancillary controls are grouped in a way that could lead to misidentification in the "heat of the moment".

Cause

The cause of the accident was that the aircraft sustained a complete loss of engine power at a height and in a position that precluded the possibility of a successful forced landing. A likely explanation of the engine power loss was that the pilot operated the cabin heat control in the mistaken belief that he was operating the carburettor heat control, and carburettor icing then occurred.

Close-up of the Airtourer's instrument panel, showing relative positions of (1) cabin heat control, (2) carburettor heat control and (3) mixture control.



CO-OP CORNER

I wish to announce on behalf of your Board of Directors that the negotiations with A.N.A.P. for the remanufacture of the Airtourer Aircraft have been terminated.

This decision was taken after due deliberation by the Directors, that after the protracted negotiations that had taken place with A.N.A.P. it was apparent they were not fully prepared to meet our Boards proposed terms of agreement. The main requisite of these being the full protection of the Shareholders interests, hence the Boards decision.

GUY MAIN - Secretary