

CIVIL AVIATION NEWS

SCANDINAVIAN REORGANIZATION

THERE has recently been considerable speculation on the possible withdrawal of D.N.L. (Norwegian National Airline) from the S.A.S. system. According to a report from Sweden, the Norwegian Ministry of Communications has informed D.N.L. that, because of unsatisfactory financial results, it must cease participating in the European operations of S.A.S. by April 1st, 1950.

Such a ban would deal a heavy blow to the principle of "Scandinavian co-operation in the air," and the report gives rise to considerable speculation as to the future of the Norwegian carrier. It has been suggested that, in the event of such a breakaway, D.N.L. would operate only limited European services and withdraw completely from the long-range routes, as it could not possibly operate in open competition with a Danish-Swedish S.A.S. due to lack of competitive aircraft. The privately owned Braathens S.A.F.E. company would then, no doubt, have considerable scope for expansion. Duplication of effort and unbalanced organization within the S.A.S. system has been the subject of much criticism in Scandinavia, and until now, has prohibited satisfactory operating results.

A meeting is being held on January 11th in which the full Boards of the three airlines concerned will participate and although it is not certain whether D.N.L. will, in fact, cease operating within the S.A.S. system, drastic re-organization plans are expected to emerge from the discussions.

G.C.A. IN NOVEMBER

THE poor approach-visibility which was prevalent throughout November has resulted in one of the busiest months for G.C.A. personnel at both London and Northolt airports. The monthly report from London Airport, where 343 approaches were carried out, shows that the accuracy with which pilots are now making their controlled approaches has proved that many practice "let-downs" flown in the more favourable conditions of the previous months had been worth while. The direct hand-over from Southern Radar (a microwave early-warning system) to G.C.A. has been further developed during the month.

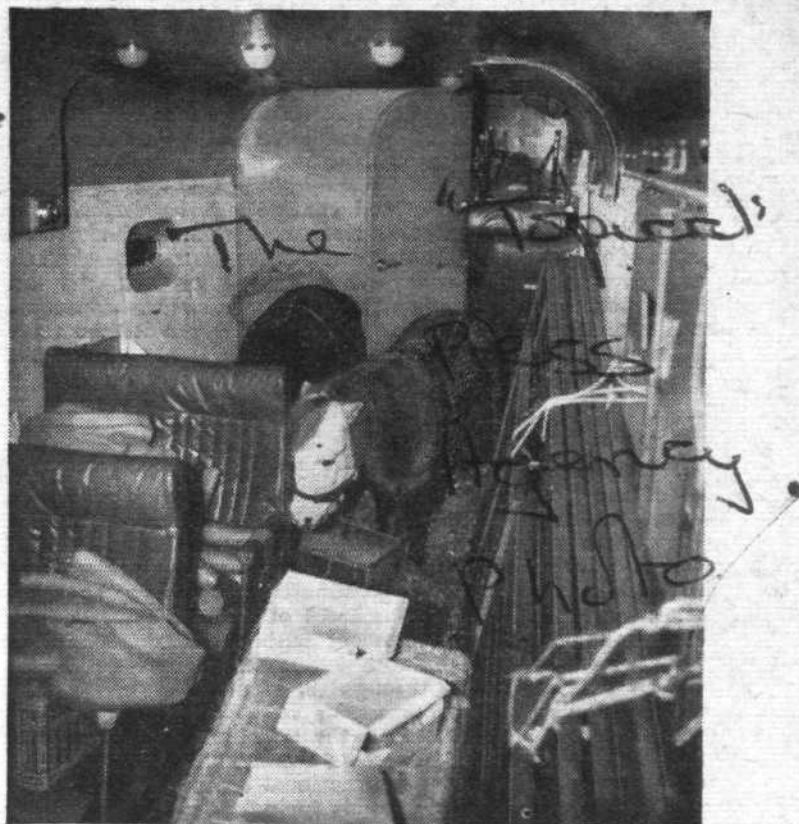
At Northolt, 714 approaches in all categories were made. Apart from that of Gatow, in the days of the Air Lift, this is believed to be the heaviest traffic carried by any G.C.A. unit in one month. The number of approaches to date at London Airport totals 6,614 and at Northolt 6,144.

INDIAN ACCIDENT

THE report of the committee appointed by the Indian Civil Aviation Department to inquire into the K.L.M. Constellation crash near Bombay on July 12th attributed direct responsibility to an error of judgment on the part of the pilot. The accident resulted in the deaths of 34 passengers and crew. It was stated that the pilot attempted to land by executing a circling procedure (in which the aircraft re-entered low cloud) instead of asking for holding or diversion instructions after he became aware by visual observation of the weather conditions prevailing at the airport. Among the contributory causes of the accident were "the unfamiliarity of the pilot and crew with the topography of the countryside near Bombay and the pilot's failure to adjust engine and aircraft controls to obtain an adequate rate of climb." The Government of India and the Dutch Civil Aviation Department have both agreed with the findings.

B.O.A.C. PROSPECTS

THAT the coming year must inevitably be a particularly difficult one for B.O.A.C. is the view expressed by Sir Miles Thomas in a New Year message to the Corporation's staff. "The rate of deficit is far too high in spite of energetic and far-reaching steps that have been and are being taken to reduce expenditure," the chairman said. "While the long-range prospects for B.O.A.C. are undoubtedly bright it would be quite wrong to take a complacent view of the financial results of the Corporation's current operations."



NOAH'S ARK : The cargo of a York aircraft recently flown from Spain to Liverpool consisted of five lions, two ponies and four monkeys, destined for a circus at Manchester. On landing, it is said, the pilot gave a sigh of relief and reholstered a .45 revolver — although the passenger seen above looks harmless enough.

The aircraft-delivery position was now improving, but the statement intimated that the delay in delivery of the new long-range aircraft, which were ordered a considerable time ago, was in no small measure responsible for the present high rate of deficit. Of the six Stratocruisers due by March, 1948, only one had so far been delivered, the four aircraft which are now operating on the Atlantic route having been taken over from Scandinavian Airlines. The Corporation had not yet received any of the Hermes IVs, said Sir Miles, although the original expectation was that the whole fleet of 25 would be delivered by December, 1949. In fact, the first aircraft is at the moment undergoing a lengthy pre-acceptance examination at the hands of B.O.A.C.'s inspectors.

The new fleet of Argonauts was now complete, but the extension of the Corporation's route-pattern to cover the old B.S.A.A. network—necessitated by the Tudor disaster and their subsequent grounding—had entailed an extended spares provision which had not yet been completed. Apart from the capital loss involved by the withdrawal of Tudors from passenger services the coverage of the routes by the older and less economic Yorks had increased the deficit by £1½ million.

During the coming year devaluation with its consequent higher fuel and station costs would increase expenditure by £1 million, offset to some extent by the £400,000 increase in revenue. A further sum of £1 million for training crews on the new aircraft would have been spent before the increased revenue yield from the new types is forthcoming. Although the administration reorganization of B.O.A.C. was contributing substantially to economies, it had not yet had time to come fully into effect. Sir Miles Thomas continued: "By the early spring we should begin to see the turn of the tide. Already the substitution of Argonauts for flying boats on the Far East routes is showing very encouraging financial results, turning a loss of £320,000 a year into a contribution of £400,000 a year to general overheads. While part of this saving is due to the elimination of the flying-boat bases along the route it gives an indication of what can be expected as the new and competitive fleets of aircraft are brought fully into operation."

Whilst recognizing that the immediate reduction of operating deficit is of paramount importance to B.O.A.C. *Flight* feels that even the Corporation must share our regret at the prospective withdrawal of Solents from service on the Empire routes. The comfort of the flying boat on lengthy overseas services, to say nothing of the psychological "safety" factor on trans-ocean or coastal routes, have made it a firm favourite with passengers, and it is indeed unfortunate that B.O.A.C.,