



VARIG's Dornier Wal "Atlantico," the first passenger aircraft registered in Brazil (1927).

the first daily flight in Brazil; and the company embarked on an expansion programme that has not slowed down since.

Just preceding and during the war years, VARIG, at its own expense, built and equipped landing-strips, created weather stations and an entire radio and telecommunications network, pioneered flight-safety equipment, and installed night-flying facilities at 19 airports. DC-3s and C-46s were put into service and proved a god-send; night-mail services were inaugurated and the first tourist-class services launched. With typical Southern Brazilian thoroughness and patience, as well as provincial patriotism, the company established a remarkably solid base before venturing outside the limits of its home state. This it did first in 1942, not to other Brazilian states, but to Montevideo, the capital of the neighbouring Republic of Uruguay. Rio was reached only in 1946, and then the other two southern states, Santa Catarina and booming Paraná, were covered with the kind of network VARIG had pioneered in Rio Grande do Sul—a more arduous task since these two states are very mountainous and covered with dense forests and lie within the troubled atmospheric belt between the temperate and sub-tropical zones.

In 1952 VARIG added a 3,500-mile route to Brazil's third main area of population, the coastal cities of the north-east, and in 1954 its second international service (to Buenos Aires). In 1955, a Pôrto Alegre - Rio - New York route, operated with Super-G Constellations, was opened, becoming the company's luxury flag-service incorporating all the trimmings of "gracious living" aloft. Supporting this new effort to realize the fabled sumptuousness of the Astaire-Rogers era is a particularly active public relations drive which sees to such things as the invitation of film stars and international celebrities. VARIG has already a sales and prestige office in Zurich and is about to open another in Tokyo. Next on the agenda are certain complementary domestic routes, including one to Brasilia, and eventually routes to Europe and the Far East.

The progress story on the traffic side is paralleled on the maintenance as well as on the administrative sides. VARIG now has a staff of 3,800. The maintenance base, which has been kept at distant Pôrto Alegre because of its spaciousness and favourable working conditions (unobtainable in either Rio or Sao Paulo), is of high international standard. A side-line is a section where government training and flying-club aircraft, which are used until they literally fall to the ground, are sent from all over Brazil for com-

plete rehabilitation. A unique aviation school—flying and engineering—was added in 1951. On the administrative side, this pioneering company is distinguished by a shareholding structure in which half the total shares are held by an employees' foundation which offers benefits ranging from pensions and medical care to holiday resorts. The remainder of the shares are held 35 per cent by the employees themselves, 10 per cent by private holders, and 5 per cent by the State Government. Shareholders, obviously patriotic, forgo their dividends so that all profits may be ploughed back for development.

VARIG statistics for 1956 were: passengers carried, 511,414 (up 26 per cent over 1955); freight, 17,000,321 ton-km flown (up 15 per cent); km flown, 18,467,982; hours flown, 67,000; extension of lines, 30,024 km; staff, 3,800; fleet, 23 DC-3s, 14 C-46s, five Convair 240s, three Constellation L.1049Gs.

Brazil is now covered by a dense network of internal air routes operated by six major airlines. Passenger services have three classes: first, carried in Convairs or Constellations; tourist, in DC-4s, Scandias, and C-46s; and third in DC-3s, with maximum seating in C-46s. The fare structure, enforced by the Diretoria de Aviação Civil, is related to a basic rate of about 5d a mile, first being set at 5 per cent above basic, tourist at 10 per cent below, and third at 20 per cent below.

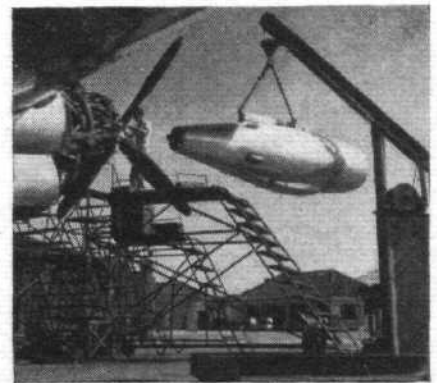
On this network, a dozen trunk routes (short and medium hauls) linking the provincial capitals and chief commercial cities, stand out. The rest of the system, unglamorous but as vital, is the amazing "countryman's" network, interlinking almost every little town, settlement, or outpost on the huge map of Brazil. This sector, on which are flown rather more than half the total number of hours flown in Brazil, and to which the Brazilian airlines bring the technical and financial power earned on the more profitable trunk routes, provides such freight and passenger transport as in most other countries relies on buses, trucks and local trains. It has an unfrivolous *clientèle* of farmers, cattlemen and traders to whom flying, in spite of its relatively high cost, is the only economic manner of transport. Hops are sometimes as short as 50 miles, runways mostly poor, and the latest standards of flying comfort obviously not expected nor required. It is not surprising that these services should be operated almost exclusively by the faithful DC-3s. The directors of VARIG—which has 23 such aircraft—actually plan to use them for another ten years. It is also an ideal area for the retirement from the trunk routes of such aircraft as the C-46.

It is in relation to the domestic trunk route network that the interesting topic of replacement first comes up. This part of the network resembles more the European or North American pattern, with 200- to 900-mile hops between cities of substantial importance. It includes the prize short-haul, Rio - Sao Paulo, which has the world's second highest frequency, with aircraft leaving every 15 minutes in both directions. On its trunk routes, VARIG at present employs Convair 240s, and C-46s fitted with Palas auxiliary jet pods. It is on this sector that VARIG has introduced two novelties to Brazil: the business-man's or after-dark non-stop services between two such distant points as Pôrto Alegre and Rio, and the



(Left) VARIG's home base—Pôrto Alegre, South Brazil.

(Right) A Turboméca Palas A.T.O. jet pod being mounted on a C-46.



Passengers embarking on a Convair 240 "business-man's flight" at a South Brazilian airport.

