

FRENCH INTERNAL AIRLINE

AFTER years of objection, primarily from the French National Railways, an internal air network has at last been established within metropolitan France.

The new operator, Air Inter, is a consortium formed by Air France, T.A.I., U.A.T., Air Algerie and the French National Railways (S.N.C.F.), and uses aircraft chartered from the four airlines.

Three services, each at a frequency of six flights per week, were started last month: Paris - Strasbourg with Air Algerie DC-3s; Paris - Marseilles with U.A.T. DC-4s; Nice - Marseilles - Toulouse - Tarbes (or Nantes) - Bordeaux (or Biarritz) with T.A.I. DC-3s. A fourth service, Paris - Nice with Air France Constellations, will start in May. The services from Paris use Le Bourget.

COACH AIR BY AIR CHARTER

TWO hours, fifteen minutes from Euston Square, London, to Marck Airport, Calais, was the time taken by passengers on Air Charter's inaugural coach-air service on Tuesday, April 1. Coach-air services from Southend—essentially an extension of the company's Channel Air Bridge car-ferry flights—were also flown to Ostend and Rotterdam for the first time on that day.

Among the passengers on the inaugural flight to Calais were the Mayors of St. Pancras and of Southend; Mr. Bernard Collins, manager of Southend Airport; and Mr. D. A. Whybrow, manager of Air Charter's channel air bridge division. Coach passengers left Euston at 0955 hr, arrived at Southend Airport at 1125, took off 15 minutes later in Bristol 170 Mk 32 G-ANVS *Vigilant* piloted by Capt. W. J. Unwin, and touched down at Calais at 1210. A lunch to celebrate the occasion was attended by civic representatives from Calais, Dunkirk and Lille.

Spare passenger-capacity on Air Charter's car-ferry services is used for the flight section of the coach-air operation. The company's Bristol 170s, which normally carry 15 passenger seats, can be fitted with eight extra seats if required. The initial frequency of the coach-air services is one per day, with extra week-end services during July and August. Air Charter state that they intend to develop the operation to a summer frequency next year of one coach departure from Euston each hour.

Air Charter's channel air bridge flights from Southend began with the Calais service in 1954, and were expanded to include Ostend (1955) and Rotterdam (1956). During 1957 a total of 18,000 vehicles and 50,000 passengers were carried; increases of 40 per cent and 85 per cent respectively on these figures are expected this year. During the summer peak periods of 1958, 108 services will be operated daily, of which 70 will be on the Calais route. This represents a daily capacity of 1,100 passengers and 420 cars to and from Calais.

CONSTELLATION TO ELECTRA

LOCKHEED will look back on 1957 as the peak year for an airliner series which began almost 20 years ago. Constellation sales last year climbed to a record \$203m—71 per cent higher than 1956 and 54 per cent above the previous record established when 55 Super Constellations were sold in 1955.

Last year's sales included 15 L.1049Gs, 27 L.1049Hs and 35 L.1649As, a total of 77 aircraft. This year will see Constellation deliveries dropping to about a score L.1049Hs as production capacity switches to the Electra.

Lockheed plan to deliver 14 Electras by the end of this year, 12 of these going to Eastern Air Lines and the remaining two to American Airlines. Eastern's first aircraft will be delivered in September, shortly after the planned certification date. Eastern will receive a further two aircraft in October and four in November. December will see delivery of the first two Electras to American and another five to Eastern.

American's order was placed in May 1955, delivery of 35 aircraft to take place during the first half of 1959. Eastern's original order stipulated that 12 aircraft be delivered in 1958 and a further

28 during 1959. Each of these airlines is reported to have options on a further 30. Another four carriers are due to receive Electras next year: Braniff (nine aircraft) and National (23) in the spring; K.L.M. (12) and Western (nine) in the autumn.

DROPPING IN AT THE RACES

PPRIVATE pilots receive perquisites infrequently enough to make an additional facility very acceptable. Just before Easter, a new airfield within the motor racing circuit at Goodwood received a licence from the M.T.C.A., and about 30 light aircraft were expected for the Easter Monday meeting. The airfield, which will be open all the year round, should prove very popular with motor racing enthusiasts; for flying to a race meeting is a very satisfactory way of avoiding the inevitable road congestion. There are two grass landing strips, one 2,300ft x 150ft sited 034/214 deg T, and the other 2,280ft x 150ft at 098/278 deg T.

Flight's Gemini looked in at Goodwood recently and found the signals area and windsock very clear, the strips well marked and—as a result of much levelling—reasonably smooth and level.

MORE COMPETITION IN FLORIDA

THE C.A.B. decision in the Great Lakes/South East service case is hardly designed to please Eastern Air Lines. Northwest has been awarded the plum route, Chicago - Florida, over which Eastern and Delta already operate. Delta's service from Florida to Cincinnati has been extended to Detroit, and T.W.A. may now link Florida to St. Louis, these two routes both being former Eastern preserves. A new route, Buffalo to Florida via Cleveland and Pittsburgh, has been awarded to Capital.

For Eastern, suffering from the effects of bad weather in Florida and of increased competition from National and Northeast, these awards must be discomfoting. But Northwest and Capital in particular have cause for gratitude.

COOL BLANKET

IN the annotations to the double-page cutaway drawing of the Comet 4, on page 423 of *Flight* for March 28, we referred to the jet-pipe blanketing as Refrasil asbestos/aluminium covering. The British Refrasil Co., Ltd., of Stillington, County Durham, point out that Refrasil blanket is a pure silica high-temperature insulation material—which, they state, will stand temperatures far higher than asbestos—and is covered in stainless steel, not aluminium, sheet.

BREVITIES

THE Maltese Government boycotted the recent opening of Luqa's new terminal building as an expression of dissatisfaction at Britain's failure to allow Malta jurisdiction over civil aviation affairs.

An air agreement has been signed between Bulgaria, Denmark and Norway.

Mr. F. W. Reeves is to succeed Mr. G. N. Roberts as general manager of T.E.A.L. on May 31.

Bombay's new air terminal, which cost Rs.45m (£3.4m), is now in operation.

The Government of Nepal has appointed a five-man council to advise on the regulation and development of domestic air transport.

A 24-hour strike by French air traffic control officers stopped all B.E.A. and Air France services between London and Paris on April 1.

Letters carried on Irish Air Lines' inaugural Transatlantic flights will bear stamps impressed by a special cachet and may be enclosed in suitably inscribed first-flight covers.

B.O.A.C. aircraft have been chartered by U.N.O. to carry out replacement of about 1,000 troops stationed in the Gaza Strip. The operation, using Argonauts and Constellations between Beirut and Scandinavia, was due to start this week.

The Royal Aeronautical Society's Third Air Transport course, held at Oriel College, Oxford, is due to end today. It has been attended by 69 students of various nationalities, who have been addressed by some 27 guest lecturers and speakers.

Reproduced from the Japanese magazine "Airview" is this first picture of Republic's 77,500 lb Rainbow. Official information from Republic about their new turboprop has yet to be released.

