



A I R C O M M E R C E

VC10 PROGRESS

JUST over a year since the first flight of the VC10, total flying hours on the type now exceed 850. On July 6, G-ARVF, the sixth VC10 and the fifth for BOAC, made its first flight from Weybridge.

Detail plans have now been announced for a thousand-hour overseas route-flying programme to be conducted jointly by BOAC and Vickers, due to begin in early September. G-ARVF, fully furnished to BOAC standard, will be the aircraft involved in the tests, which will be based on London Airport. After a week or two of local familiarization flying, the route programme will get under way with ten flights between London and Beirut during the next fortnight. During the fourth and fifth weeks three return flights are planned to Beirut and six to Khartoum; and from then on, until 800hr have been accumulated, the fortnightly pattern will include two return flights each to Beirut, Karachi and Nairobi. The final 200hr will be spent on Atlantic flying with trips to Montreal and Toronto. The first part of the programme will form the 250hr or so route-flying hours needed to qualify for the C of A; thereafter the tests will be concentrated on proving the aircraft's structure and systems under intensive and varied operating conditions.

It has been rumoured for some time that a VC10 would be sent to New Zealand as part of the route-proving programme and to put on a demonstration for Tasman Empire Airways, who are close to making a decision on their choice of long-range equipment. At the time of writing it is understood that the NZ idea is still a possibility, but with such an immense development flying programme compacted into a tight schedule it must obviously be carefully considered by both Vickers and BOAC. In any event, the VC10 could not go to New Zealand before August.

The C of A is expected to be awarded to the VC10 in January 1964, and deliveries of the aircraft to BOAC are due to begin in February, in time for crew training before scheduled services begin in April. The VC10 will enter commercial service on the corporation's West African routes at an initial frequency of seven flights per week, building up to ten per week in May. In June the VC10 will enter transatlantic service on the London - Montreal route, reaching daily frequency by the end of the month. By the end of August 1964, BOAC aim to have VC10s on all routes to Africa and South America.

Meanwhile back at the ranch, so to speak, production of BOAC's twelve standard VC10s is well advanced, and the fuselage of the twelfth is in the final assembly jig. Large components have also taken shape for the first two aircraft for both British United and Ghana Airways. The first Super VC10 will fly early in 1964.

THE CONCORDE ORDER BOOK

CONTINENTAL Airlines are reported to be considering an order for three Concorde for their Los Angeles - Chicago route. National have also come out in favour of Mach 2 rather than Mach 3. This news of US interest in the Concorde, or the Concorde idea, contrasts with the views of United (June 27 issue, page 1009).

Questioned recently in the House of Commons about the escape clause in Pan American's order for Concorde, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Aviation, Mr Neil Marten, replied: "This is a commercial agreement between the airline and the manufacturers, and its terms are confidential." Asked by Mr Rankin whether, in view of the fact that millions of public money are being invested in the Concorde, the public ought not to have more accurate information about the contract, Mr Marten said that there would have to be agreement between Sud, BAC, the two governments and PAA before anything could be released which was not already agreed. It was, said Mr Marten, "only natural" that Pan American should "wish to safeguard themselves when ordering an airliner so long before entry into service." Nevertheless the order was a real one, and PAA would pay "a substantial penalty if they change their minds."

According to *Aviation Week* one of the escape clauses in the contract between PAA and BAC/Sud provides that the airline will be released from contractual obligations if the US decides to build a supersonic transport. Since it is certain that the Americans will build a supersonic transport, the existence of such a clause would mean that PAA have no firm commitment to the Concorde. *Aviation Week* also say that the cancellation penalties are "slight," quoting \$750,000 maximum and \$50,000 minimum.

According to *Aviation Daily* Pan American's Concorde requirements are understood to include a requirement for Atlantic non-stop capability carrying 95 passengers typical (maximum seating is 104 economy four-abreast) or a 20,000lb payload.

Footnote Sud-Aviation is reported to be "cautiously [contesting]" Panair do Brasil's claimed priority to Concorde deliveries before Air France, BOAC and PAA (*Flight International*, April 25, page 593). Whilst admitting that Panair do Brasil took an option on the Super Caravelle when it ordered Caravelles, Sud is understood to have told the Brazilian airline that this was before the BAC-Sud agreement and that the Concorde is by no means the same as the projected Super Caravelle. Furthermore Panair do Brasil, says Sud, has partially suspended its Caravelle order, completion of which "obviously" governs the order for Concorde.



The unpainted VC10 to the right of this picture is the first of 30 Super VC10s for BOAC. Now in one of the two final assembly hangars at Weybridge, this aircraft now has its wings attached. A note on VC10 progress appears on this page