



Nigeria Airways' fine new £900,000 engineering base at Lagos was opened by the President of Nigeria, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, on December 13. It incorporates an office block and a training school

### BACK IN BUSINESS

THE second BAC One-Eleven, G-ASJA, made a successful first flight lasting 25min from Hurn Airport on December 19. The aircraft was piloted by Mr Jock Bryce, chief test pilot of British Aircraft Corporation, with Mr D. Glaser, the corporation's senior test pilot at Hurn, as co-pilot. Take-off weight of the aircraft was 60,000lb, and the flight took place on a perfect winter's day—sunny and cloudless.

Before take-off Mr Bryce made one low-speed taxi run down the runway, followed by a high-speed return run. A few minutes later, without refuelling, G-ASJA took off.

G-ASJA is being used mainly for aircraft systems development. The three One-Elevens which follow G-ASJA (BUA's second, third and fourth aircraft) will also be fully instrumented and will undertake performance, flight resonance, and final stability and control work, together with autopilot trials. These aircraft are now in final assembly at Hurn and will be in the air by the spring.

Design changes will be incorporated progressively in the test fleet as required. As already stated, these will consist primarily of alterations to the wing leading edge shape and modifications to the elevator linkage to permit a more direct mechanical connection between the pilot's control and the elevator.

### RUNNING IN THE VC10

INITIAL experience with the VC10 flying on typical BOAC routes has, claim the manufacturers, shown an excellent standard of reliability and serviceability. Since the overseas route-proving programme began on October 17 the aircraft has averaged more than 8.2hr flying a day, excluding a period on the ground for routine maintenance.

The proving programme is being flown by G-ARVF, the fifth of 12 standard VC10s for BOAC. It is intended to occupy approximately 1,000hr in flying under typical service conditions, allowing initial operating snags to be identified and overcome before regular passenger-carrying flights begin next spring.

Up to December 9 the VC10 had flown 346hr on overseas flights plus a further 72hr on local crew training at London Airport. It is now completing a routine maintenance check plus a modification programme to permit operations at the higher gross weight, 312,000lb, which is now to be the initial certificated figure. The route-proving programme is being resumed early in January with further flights to Africa, followed by a series of transatlantic flights to Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver for cold-weather experience.

VC10 G-ARVF was delivered to London Airport from the British Aircraft Corporation's flight test centre at Wisley on October 1, at which time it had flown a total of 112hr. Since then it has been occupied as follows:—

October 3-14 BOAC crew training from London Airport. Twenty-three flights and 193 landings, totalling 72hr 20min.

October 17-29 Initial overseas proving flights. Eleven round trips, London-Beirut-London, totalling 104hr 20min. One flight cancelled by alternator unserviceability. The aircraft was on

the ground for routine maintenance from October 30 to November 7. November 7-December 9 Second series of overseas proving flights, to Beirut, Lagos, Kano, Accra and Nairobi (by way of Rome, Khartoum and Aden). Fifty-nine sector flights, plus local flights from Nairobi and London Airport, totalling 260hr. One flight cancelled by aircraft unserviceability.

The overseas flights have been scheduled on a realistic basis each day, and the programme has operated punctually. Of the 32 scheduled departures from London Airport, 27 operated without significant delay attributable to aircraft unserviceability. Enroute turnrounds have been made in as little as 30min, helped by the high refuelling rate of 1,000gal per minute achieved through the two pressure refuelling points.

Routine maintenance has been undertaken at London Airport by BOAC personnel aided by a small team of the manufacturer's service engineers. The BOAC maintenance staff are said to have been impressed by the small number of defects which have needed to be cleared at the end of each flight—experience in this respect has been significantly better than with other jet types put into service by BOAC, including those which were already operated by other airlines at the time of their introduction.

The overseas flights are providing information which will help towards the smooth and trouble-free introduction into service of the VC10. This information is being analysed and, where necessary, modifications are being introduced to overcome operating snags.

Total flying hours on the VC10 by December 16 were 2,051 in 862 flights. Contributing to this total were seven aircraft of the BOAC fleet and G-ARTA, the original VC10 which is owned by British Aircraft Corporation. Two of these VC10s, G-ARVG and G-ARVH, have been delivered on loan to BOAC for crew training, based at Shannon in Ireland.

The ninth VC10, G-ARVI, made its first flight on December 20 and this aircraft, which is to full production standard, will be used for a 200hr programme of representative route flying early next year, prior to certification of the VC10 by the Air Registration Board.

### THE POPE AS PASSENGER

CURRENTLY facing up to problems of protocol which no airline has ever met before is Alitalia, which will convey Pope Paul on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land on Saturday. It will be the first time a Pope has travelled by air. The last time a Pope left Italy was for the coronation of Napoleon.

The Alitalia DC-8 which will make the flight on January 4 will retain its national markings but the Papal flag, in yellow and white with the crossed keys of St Peter, will adorn its sides. The cabin has been refurbished and, it is reported, is lined with red material embossed with the Papal seal.

Stewards will replace stewardesses in the crew. The route will be either via Athens and Beirut or via Rhodes and Tel Aviv, to Amman. It is expected that the aircraft will be escorted in turn by fighters of the countries along the route.