

## AIR TRANSPORT . . .

### ARE SEAT BELTS ADEQUATE?

TURBULENCE incidents and accidents continue. A serious one is recorded in a recent CAB summary report of US air-carrier accidents. During a descent through a line of thunderstorms a Northwest Boeing 720B encountered severe turbulence. The important feature of this incident is that, although all crew and passengers had their seat belts fastened and inspected, one passenger was thrown from her seat and seriously injured. No apparent malfunction or failure of the belt was disclosed in later investigation. A cabin attendant also received serious injuries when a fire extinguisher came loose from its mounting bracket. Again, no fault could be found and when the extinguisher was re-installed it could not be dislodged.

During the three-minute period of turbulence the descent of the 720B was effectively stopped by updraughts for a period of 1½ minutes, with g forces up to +3.3.

### AERALPI'S SKYVAN PLANS

SINCE Aeralpi ordered the Short Skyvan earlier this year their whole philosophy of operations has undergone a dramatic change. The airline was originally formed to bring air services to some of the more isolated parts of northern Italy. This it has achieved with the Turbo-Porters currently in operation to such effect that it became necessary to order a larger aircraft. But now that the airline's forward planning has been able to include use of the Skyvan, Aeralpi hope to develop their operations throughout Italy.

On a recent visit to Britain, Dr Lionello Fabriani, manager of the airline, outlined some of the plans made possible with the Skyvan. "Italy is a country divided, as it were, into 'compartments' and communications are sometimes difficult. This is particularly so during the winter when the larger airlines operate fewer services and traffic falls to a point where it is uneconomic to operate aircraft of Viscount size. This is where the Skyvan can play its part and it will be particularly valuable in providing services linking inaccessible places, having small fields, with airports such as Verona, Turin and Genoa, which in turn feed the international airports at Rome and Milan."

Aeralpi plans for the Skyvan include probable tie-in services in collaboration with Swissair, Air France, Alitalia and other major airlines, serving mountainous or seaside resorts in the north. There is also a distinct possibility that Aeralpi will

Dr Lionello Fabriani, managing director of Aeralpi, in the Skyvan's cockpit with Mr E. G. Collinson, Shorts' chief mechanical engineer



take over certain routes during the winter, including services extending as far south as Sardinia. The industrial triangle of Milan, Turin and Genoa is considered to be particularly suited to Skyvan freight operations.

Although Aeralpi's plans for the future are built mainly around the four Skyvan aircraft they have on order, the Turbo-Porters will still have their part to play. There is a considerable requirement for the type of mountain flying which involves landing on glaciers. In the past the Porters have been so busy fulfilling their regular airline commitments that it has been difficult to release them for such charter flights. When the Skyvan comes into operation the Porters will have more time available for this type of flying.

Development of services to the south of the current operational area is not expected to detract from Aeralpi's original *raison d'être*, which is to provide services for the isolated and mountainous north. This side of the business continues to expand. Each district in this area is anxious to have its own airstrip; several of these are at present under construction and others are planned.

Aeralpi began operations in 1962 and, since that time, have achieved a satisfactory growth. In three months of 1962, for instance, they flew 136hr and carried 678 passengers. For a full year's operation in 1964 the figures were 1,727hr and 4,915 passengers. This total of passengers has been exceeded in the first eight months of 1965, up to August they had carried 5,887 passengers in 1,426hr—fewer hours than were flown in the previous year.

### CUNARD AND BOAC'S RECONSTRUCTION

DURING the debate on the Air Corporations Bill (see last week's issue, pages 955-956) Mr Roy Jenkins, Minister of Aviation, referred to a letter received from Sir Giles Guthrie giving an assurance that no benefit would flow to Cunard from the financial reconstruction of BOAC. Mr Jenkins had also, he said, asked BOAC's auditors to give him a certificate, at any time, to assure him that no part of the reconstruction involved was in fact flowing to Cunard.

For the record, here is the letter sent by Sir Giles to the Minister:—

"You recently told me that you considered it essential to be able to make it absolutely plain to Parliament that no part of the aid to be provided to BOAC in the promised financial reconstruction Bill would find its way into the hands of the shareholders of the Cunard Steam-Ship Company.

"As you are aware, this aid will in effect be applied in two ways, first to the elimination of BOAC's accumulated deficit and secondly to the establishment of a reserve. It is clear that the elimination of the accumulated deficit cannot have any effect on the shareholders of the Cunard Steam-Ship Company. As regards the application of the reserve, this is something which, even under the existing statute, is in your control; no part of it could pass directly to the shareholders of the Cunard Steam-Ship Company without your express knowledge and consent.

"What I think you may have in mind is that under the arrangements between BOAC and the Cunard Steam-Ship Company, which must properly remain confidential for commercial reasons, some indirect benefit may flow to the latter, which would not have occurred had there been no reconstruction. I can assure you that there are no circumstances in which I can foresee that this is likely to happen, or, indeed, in which BOAC would permit it to happen.

"The basic arrangement between the two organisations is that BOAC operates as part of its own fleet the actual fleet of aircraft jointly owned with Cunard. BOAC-Cunard pays for the services operated by BOAC on its behalf at full cost as established for BOAC's own operations on the basis of the company's ownership of a fleet of Boeing 707 and Super VC10 aircraft. The capacity produced by Super VC10 aircraft used on the company's behalf over and above the output of the basic fleet of 11 Boeings is costed to the company at full rates.

"These charges can reflect no element of the Government's assistance to BOAC, since they are related to the actual costs of the aircraft as they appear in BOAC's books. Unless, with your consent, reserves were applied to subsidising the operating cost of aircraft, or some similar purpose, the charges in BOAC's books could not be affected.

"At the present time the fleet owned by BOAC-Cunard consists of 11 Boeing 707s and four Super VC10s, all of which have been or are being paid for (through debentures) by BOAC-Cunard as a normal commercial transaction and at the proper price and no element of the intended Government aid is reflected in the acquisition prices of these aircraft."