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DEFECTS: MANDATORY REPORTS?

THE British Civil Aviation Authority has recently written
to interested parties inviting comments on whether a
system of mandatory reporting of aircraft defects and
operational incidents should be introduced. A letter from
J. R. Neill, director of flight safety, outlines the existing voluntary machinery for defect reporting in Britain and gives the following statistics for reports in the public transport field made in 1971: —

Operators' summaries of technical problems and engineering defects ... ... 1,255 Flight Safety Committee information exchange (not included in operators' summaries) ... ... 64 Reports by aerodromes and air traffic control 70 Bird-strike reports 346

1,735

Ignoring bird strikes, 86 per cent of the above reports concerned defects; the total number of reports was 7 per cent higher than in 1970.
The letter suggests three possible lines of action con-cerning future arrangements: (a) further encouragement and example under the auspices of the UK Flight Safety Committee, the General Aviation Safety Committee and through the machinery for the air operator's certificate (AOC); (b) the setting-up of formal channels of reporting by operators; or (c) full mandatory reporting.
As regards (a), the letter notes an existing AOC require-ment that companies should have systematic procedures for encouraging and processing reports from aircraft com-manders and others, and that flight operations inspectors are aware of the need to ensure that the requirement is complied with.
As for the establishment of formal channels for operators' reports to the CAA, the letter says that the necessary legislation would be justified only if there were evidence that operators were failing to disseminate infor-mation through existing channels. Such channels, it adds, might inhibit distribution of information by operators to manufacturers and other operators.
A fully mandatory system, says the letter, would have the following advantages: it would result in a clear-cut situation leading to rapid accident prevention measures; it would, with proper analysis, ensure the detection of trends which might otherwise go unnoticed; and it would highlight deficiencies in equipment and systems, and so put pressure on those responsible for corrective action. Against this the CAA finds the following disadvantages in a mandatory system: it would increase regulation in an already closely regulated industry; it would introduce penalties for a whole new range of offences; it would involve subjective opinion, for example as to whether in a particular case the safety of the aircraft was jeopardised, and this would make enforcement difficult; and it would depend on the goodwill of aircrew in cases relating to operational incidents, and compulsion would probably inhibit their co-operation. The CAA adds that the present voluntary system appears to be as effective as the overseas mandatory systems which the authority has studied.

FIRS T AI R CANAD A TRISTA R

RECENTLY rolled out at Palmdale, Air Canada's first TriStar is due to reach Montreal early this month. Services are planned to begin on February 15 on the Toronto-Miami run, which has dense traffic at that time. On March 15 the first TriStar will be used on the trans-continental Montreal-Toronto-Vancouver trunk route.

According to the airline it is "very close" to converting options on a further nine aircraft to firm orders. These would be for the extended-range Dash 2 version, at least some of which would be required for service by 1976. An airline spokesman said there could be eventual orders for another ten or so.
Air Canada has ten TriStars on order, and a 15-year arrangement with the Haas-Turner finance house to share a further two with Eastern, at times to suit the two air-lines' traffic peaks, starting this year. Air Canada will have

the aircraft from May to October, while Eastern will have them from November to April. Maintenance will be shared —with Air Canada responsible for the engines and Eastern for the airframe.

With the Vanguard retired, the Viscount being pro-gressively phased out (though three will now remain until next summer) and Concorde orders only a distant possi-bility, Air Canada will approach the end of the 1970s with about 30 TriStars, 50 DC-9s, 40 DC-8s and a handful of 747s, of which there are currently three in service and one on order. A short take-off and landing aircraft could also feature in the airline's plans.

NEW HEA D FOR AIR-INDI A

THE Government of India has appointed Mr K. K. Unni to the post of managing director of Air-India. He will succeed Air Marshal M. S. Chaturverdi, who is to retire on February 14. Mr Unni is at present assistant managing director of the airline, and this is the first time that the top post has been filled from within the corporation.
The new managing director, who is 53, joined Air-India
in 1960 from the Ministry of Transport and Communica-tions; he has been actively concerned in the affairs of India's two state airlines since they were nationalised in 1953.

MAS S TRAVE L GROWIN G FAS T

SCHEDULED passenger traffic carried by lata members is likely to be 13 per cent higher this year than in 1972, according to a forecast given by the association's director-general, Mr Knut Hammarskjold, this week. He added that a 20 per cent increase in cargo traffic was expected. Total lata North Atlantic traffic in 1972, at 13 million passengers, was 16 per cent up on 1971, he said, while that sector of the market travelling with promotional fares or on charter flights was 38 per cent up and totalled 10 million passengers.
Mr Hammarskjold said he was confident that North Atlantic growth would continue this year. "When plans to introduce a simplified and restructured fares pattern based on 1972 experience materialise in 1973," he said, "this should assist the scheduled airlines in counteracting the adverse financial trends of the past few years."
Such plans would help airlines to cut costs and would benefit travellers. "None the less I must caution that the world air transport industry will only be successful in realising its aims of providing low-cost service to the travelling public at economic fare levels provided there is a parallel, fully co-ordinated and uniformly implemented governmental policy framework that does not leave out an important segment of the total market, which comprises both scheduled and charter services."

Despite encouraging forecasts of traffic, said Mr Hammarskjold, 1973 would not be an easy year; continuing

The first of ten Lockheed TriStars for Air Canada is now embarking on
its flight-test programme