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BAe reveals 146 hardware

British Aerospace Hatfield has completed the first 146 test specimen (above left)—forward fuselage section 202 which is planned to undergo IS months of water-tank fatigue testing equivalent to 140,000 flights— and its jigs will be used for the first production aircraft. The interior view of specimen 202 (above), shows the capacious 14b fuselage with its I32in internal diameter—lOin more than a DC-9. Prince Philip (left), is seen inspecting the 146 flight-deck mockup (musing, perhaps, on new aircraft for the Queen's Flight?)

B.CAL challenges BA for Far-East routes
BRITISH Caledonian Airways would
like to add other Far East points to
its network if the airline is successful
in winning a licence to serve Hong
Kong. B.CAL is currently vying with
two other airlines (Laker Airways and Cathay Pacific) to compete with British Airways on London-Hong Kong, currently a BA monopoly. The Hong Kong licencing authority has already decided to grant licences to B.CAL for four services a week and to Cathay Pacific for three. But London-Hong Kong is a UK cabotage route and the final decision rests with Britain's Civil Aviation Authority (unless overturned on appeal by the Trade Secretary).

The CAA held hearings on the three Hong Kong applications in London before Christmas and is now ponder-

ing the evidence, as well as BA's objections. A complicating factor, in what is already a difficult decision for the CAA to make, is B.CAL's desire to serve other Far East points, using Hong Kong as a regional hub. B.CAL chairman Adam Thomson revealed his airline's plan for a "modest number" of destinations at the pre-Christmas hearing. B.CAL has already applied for London-Manila (via Hong Kong) to take up the reciprocal right when Philippine Airlines starts its Manila-London service in April. British Airways has also applied for the route (two services a week, via Abu Dhabi and Bangkok, using TriStar 500s). It is objecting to B.CAL's Hong Kong application, claim-ing that the independent airline is seeking a toehold in the flag carrier's

Short hauls...

• The 30 UK airports required to pay the aviation security levy, currently 85p per arriving passenger, are faced with an increase in this charge. The Government expects to approve an in-crease making the charge £1-60 with effect from February 1, 1980.
O Singapore Airlines intends phasing out its Boeing 707 fleet during 1980 because of its poor fuel economy. By April the eight 707s will have been

Short hauls...

reduced to one passenger aircraft and two freighters. The last passenger air-craft will have been phased out by the end of the year. The 707s will be re-placed on regional routes by 727s and on long hauls by revised 747 ser-vices. SIA's thrice-weekly 707 freight service to the US will be replaced by using the freight capacity of the new increased gross weight 747-200Bs, which have 830,0001b maximum weight.

traditional Far East sphere of influence.

Thomson says that B.CAL requires the Hong Kong route to offset the risks involved in its serving politically unstable areas in ' West Africa and South America. Other points in Asia which the airline might want to serve are Seoul (South Korea) and Djakarta (Indonesia). Only the Philippines route has so far been applied for.

BA Concorde

breaks 3-hour

Atlantic barrier

A British Airways Concorde, com-manded by Capt Colin Morris, has flown the New York-London run in under three hours. This fastest-ever NY-Heathrow Concorde flight took 2hr 59min 36sec from "airborne to touch-down" according to BA, which says that the record time was aided by "strong tailwinds, medium tempera-ture across the Atlantic and favour-able air traffic control conditions." The flight took place on Sunday, December 16, and operated the scheduled BA170 service. The previous best NY-Heath-row time for Concorde was 3hr 6min. Concorde celebrates four years of commercial operations with British Airways and Air France on January 21.