People...
Rene Lapautre has replaced Francis Fabre as chairman of UTA French Airlines. Fabre, founder of UTA, will stay with the airline as honorary chairman.

David Abshire and Kenneth Thomp-son have been elected to the Board of World Airways.

Per Bergsland, managing director of Wideroe's Flyveselskap, has retired. Bergsland, a former Second World War Spitfire pilot, was shot down on the Dieppe raid and was one of the successful "home runs" from the Stalag Luft III Great Escape. Peter L. Nissen, former managing director of Fred Olsen Air Transport, has been elected Bergsland's successor.

Richard Havers and Sue Edens have been appointed vice-president and assistant v-p cargo sales, respectively, for British Caledonian, North America. They will be based at BCal's office in Houston, Texas.

Hugh Reid has been appointed man-ager of British Airways' new High-lands Division. Reid joined BA in 1946 and has spent 34 years in avia-tion. Capt Jim MacDonald, who joined British Airways as a trainee pilot 26 years ago, has been named flight manager for the Division. British Air-ways' Highlands Division will begin operations on March 1, 1982.

Rene Amyot has been elected chair-man of Air Canada.

Western's chairman wants

Wien Air Alaska merger
WESTERN AIRLINES' new chairman
Neil Bergt is planning to merge Wien
Air Alaska into the troubled US
major. His intention is to reverse
Western's severe cash flow problems
and to foil Air Florida's takeover in-tentions.

Bergt owns Eagle International, a holding company formed to buy Wien Air Alaska from its current owners Household Finance Corporation. Eagle International offered House-hold Finance $50 million for Wien in November, which it accepted, but HFC is now reviewing its position after finding out that Bergt intends to sell Wien to Western for $87 mil-lion-worth of preferred Western Air-lines stock. HFC now wants to back out of its agreement with Eagle. Western has not yet filed its take-over plan for Anchorage-based Wien with the CAB, but US commerce sources believe neither the Bureau nor Household Finance is likely to offer any serious obstacle to Bergt's aims. But Bergt and Western will probably encounter opposition from Air Florida, which has announced its intention to take over Western and now owns about 12 per cent of its total shareholding. Western's Board is fighting Air Florida, but the CAB has given provisional approval for the Miami-based carrier to go ahead. A final decision has been deferred until the end of January, to allow Western to outline its own merger proposals.

Air Florida has said that currently it has nothing against Western's potential acquisition of Wien, but states it will have to study the Western bid to find out if it makes commercial sense.
Capitol International's chairman who owns 9-5 per cent of Western's shares, could also prove a problem to Bergt, since the new Western chairman needs to obtain the approval of a majority of the airline's shareholders to proceed with his plans. Air Florida's and Capitol's re-actions become especially critical after Bergt's statement that Western will report an after-tax loss of about $60 million for 1981's last quarter, compared to a $17-3 million loss for the previous nine months. Western is planning to combat the downturn by cutting management staff and mort-gaging some of the 35 aircraft it owns (the rest of its fleet is leased).
The already-complex situation may become even more confused if Air Florida starts showing losses, as it ex-pects to do for the last three months of 1981. Until now, Air Florida has been calling itself "the fastest-growing airline in the USA" and has been con-sistently increasing its profits. It is
now laying off staff in an effort to cut
costs; if it gets back to profitability
in the near future it will probably
pursue its bid for Western, but if it
does not it may draw in its horns.

Systems installation work is now being undertaken on the aft fuselage section of what will be Lufthansa's first A3I0 at Messerschmitt-Bolkow-Btohm's Hamburg factory. After the piping and wiring for the hydraulic, electronic, air conditioning and control systems has been installed, the aft section— the largest single element of the A3I0—will be delivered to the Airbus A300 and A3I0 final assembly line at Toulouse. Delivery of the section is scheduled for February 1982, when it will be joined to other fuselage sections and the systems plumbing "plugged into" the corresponding lines in the other sections

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