

Air Transport

THE AIRWAY TO AUSTRALIA

THE report of the inter-departmental committee on Australian commercial flying was published last week. The committee recommend that Australia should assume responsibility for running an air service between Darwin and Singapore. This recommendation affects the proposal of Imperial Airways to carry the service right through to Darwin, and also the proposal of the Royal Dutch Air Lines (K.L.M.) to extend their East Indies service to Australia. The committee also recommend that the service should at first only carry mails and not passengers. Mails from Croydon should reach Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne on the 17th day, Adelaide on the 18th, and Perth on the 16th. An inclusive fee of 1s. 6d. an ounce is recommended.

The Federal Government have decided to accept most of the recommendations of the report. The route from Singapore is to be over Sumatra, Java, and Timor, with stops at Batavia, Sourabaya, Bima, and Dilli.

The Government have also come to a decision on the reorganisation of the internal services, and have decided to call for tenders for:—(a) A line from Darwin through Cloncurry and Charleville to Cootamundra, with branches from Cloncurry to Normanton, and from Charleville to Brisbane. From Cootamundra the mails would be taken on to Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide by train; (b)

a line Darwin, Katherine, Perth, with a branch to Wyndham; and (c) a line between Melbourne and Hobart.

The first of these lines is practically the same as the old Qantas route, the second follows much the same line as the original West Australian Airways service, while the Tasmania service was recently operated by Australian National Airways. Under this new scheme the service between Perth and Adelaide will become superfluous, and will be discontinued.

The Federal Government expects that the air service between England and Australia consequent on the new plan will be regularly established at the beginning of 1934. It is arranging for a Defence officer to survey the route from Darwin to Singapore with an English airman who is flying to England. It is reported that tenders for aeroplanes for the Australian section of the proposed air service have been called for by the Federal Government, and that the plans for the tenders do not stipulate any type of machine, and the Government has made the terms very open in order to enable the most suitable to be chosen. The primary requirement of the Federal Government was a mail service, but if the contractors desired to carry passengers and could do so without impairing the efficiency of the mail service, so much the better.

Indian Air Mails

OUR Indian correspondent writes that the new Karachi-Bombay-Madras air mail service threatens to become a serious rival of the Delhi Flying Club's Karachi-Jodhpur-Delhi air mail service, which had till recently held the monopoly of carrying India's internal air mail letters. The Delhi Flying Club's planes used to carry more than half the total weight of the mails for Bombay and places beyond, but now that Bombay has direct air service the volume of its air mails is bound to increase to the detriment of the Karachi-Delhi service, which was serving Bombay hitherto, by way of fast train connection at Jodhpur. The Delhi Flying Club is therefore likely to lose the support of Bombay, which has been its principal client. This is indicated by the fact that the mails carried by Tata's plane for the first time amounted to 111 lb., which was nearly double the average weight sent to the same destination hitherto via Jodhpur and Delhi. The air mails carried by the Karachi-Delhi service dropped to almost 50 lb. from nearly 120 lb. carried in the previous week, a reduction of 60 per cent.

Atlantic Air Services

It would seem that regular air services across the Atlantic are not far distant. As previously reported in FLIGHT, Pan-American Airways has been looking into this problem for some time past, and it is now announced that this company has signed contracts for the construction of

two "giant" flying boats capable of carrying commercial loads over the trade routes of the Pacific and Atlantic. These machines will be the nucleus of a fleet of six to be built by the Sikorsky Aviation Corp. and the Glenn L. Martin Co., the specifications for which were drawn up under the supervision of Col. Lindbergh. It is stated that they will be capable of flying 2,500 miles non-stop with 50 passengers, mail and freight, at a speed of 125 m.p.h. According to reports, it is expected that the service will be started two years hence, the normal route probably being by way of Bermuda and the Azores, or during the summer by the Great Circle route via Newfoundland and Ireland.

Record India Air Mail

THE greatest load of Empire air mail ever carried left Croydon for India on December 4. The mail weighed nearly a ton, which, taking the Post Office average of 36 letters to the pound, was equivalent to over 80,000 letters.

Air Mails to Scandinavia

THE Postmaster-General announces that, owing to a change in the time of departure of the aeroplane, the latest time of posting air mail correspondence for Denmark, Finland, Holland (first despatch), Norway and Sweden will during December be 6 a.m., instead of 7.15 a.m., at the General Post Office, London, and correspondingly earlier elsewhere.



FOR NEW ZEALAND SERVICE: A Saro "Windhover" flying boat used for the Victoria-Tasmania trip.