

CIVIL AVIATION NEWS



HOME-GROWN: Swedish-built Scandias will soon be introduced on medium-length routes in the S.A.S. network. The first aircraft, seen here, is already serving as a training unit for crews and ground personnel; the remainder are scheduled for delivery next April.

B.O.A.C. SALES DRIVE

AN encouraging indication that the Corporations are now realizing the importance of airline "salesmanship" is seen in the fact that B.O.A.C. has just organized its first world-wide sales conference, attended by some 36 area and sales managers from the overseas bases.

Welcoming the delegates to the conference, which opened in London on November 20th under the chairmanship of Mr. Keith Granville, general manager, sales and traffic, Sir Miles Thomas said: "We stand to-day in a position of realistic optimism. . . . We have new equipment and a streamlined organization and we have established a ratio of personnel and equipment on about the right lines. We should thus be able to go forward and compete with our contemporaries on at least level terms. . . . We are selling something of good value to the public—fast, comfortable and competitive air travel. . . . an increasingly aggressive sales attack by all concerned from this moment will, I am sure, bring results that will show continuing improvement."

Flight is particularly glad to see that British operators are getting down to the roots of the problem of selling an airline ticket—a gentle art which for too long has seemed to be more or less the monopoly of our American friends and—to a lesser degree—of some European operators who have been rather quicker "to see the light" than we in Britain.

Following, as it does, the historic event last month when, for the first time, the Corporation made a profit on its operating account over all routes, this latest conference would seem to foreshadow the beginning of a much happier trend in B.O.A.C.'s operating results.

TUDOR ACCIDENT FINDINGS

THE M.C.A. has now published the findings of the Court Investigation into the cause of the accident to Tudor G-AKBY, owned by Fairflight, Ltd., which occurred near Llandow, Glam., on March 12th. We record the views and findings of the Court without comment.

The Court, conducted by Sir William McNair, K.C., assisted by two assessors, reached the conclusion that the most probable cause of the accident was to be found in the loading conditions of the aircraft, which gave a c.g. position considerably aft of that authorized in the C. of A. This resulted in insufficient elevator control remaining when the pilot applied full power at a speed which, though well above the stalling point, was sufficiently low to cause serious instability.

It was clearly established, the report states, that with the full permissible load of passengers, an acceptable c.g. position could have been secured only by the stowage of more than a ton of luggage or ballast in the main front cabin. Nowhere in the statutory regulations to which the Court's attention was called, continues the report, was there any provision dealing with the weight of passengers' luggage or ballast.

The report also criticizes the loading instructions for use with this particular type of aircraft. The present scheme contains, it says, no adequate directions for the calculation of the "mean passenger arm" in the various arrangements of seating required in charter operations—a system which seems to

throw an unduly heavy burden of responsibility upon the pilot.

The investigators recommend that, where seating arrangements are changed, a new Daily Certificate and Technical Log should be prepared, in which it should be the duty of the maintenance engineer making the alterations to record for the information of the pilot the distance of the new positions from the datum.

The Court also felt it necessary to state that so long as any latitude was permitted in the observance of Article 16 (5) (1) of the Air Navigation Order 1949 (which prohibits the flying of any aircraft "unless the operator has obtained the approval of the Ministry to written loading instructions in respect of that aircraft") it was natural that there should be a tendency towards laxity in the observance of the other provisions of the order relating to load-sheets and general load disposition.

The Court dismissed as being "inherently improbable" A.V.-M. D. C. T. Bennett's suggestion that the accident may have been caused by the pilot involuntarily pulling back on the control column as a result of his seat slipping.

Following the publication of the findings, A.V.-M. Bennett said in a statement that, in his opinion, the c.g. was certainly within the limits and that, in view of the wording of the Air Navigation Order, it seemed strange to say that the load-sheet was incorrect when no proof was submitted to the contrary.

It will be recalled that on November 22nd, Fairflight, Ltd., were fined £50, with £150 costs, for having incorrectly loaded the Tudor. Notice of appeal was subsequently lodged.

B.E.A.'s GOOD SEASON

ALTHOUGH B.E.A.'s safety record this year has been marred by the two tragic accidents in October, the Corporation has good cause to be proud of its commercial achievements this summer. Profits during the summer months were: June, £9,145; July, £116,774; August, £134,871, and September, £124,828. During the peak month, August, B.E.A. carried 130,212 passengers—more than 4,200 a day—flew a record total of 15,766 hr, and earned £1,029,772 in revenue. For the first five months of the current financial year an operating profit of £136,783 was realized, as compared with a loss of £172,358 for the previous year. The September result has brought the moving annual total deficit to less than a million pounds.

During August, the highest revenue-earning route was that from London to Paris, which produced nearly £138,000, followed by the London-Athens-Istanbul route, which brought in some £92,000. The month's highest load factor was that on the London to Channel Islands services (75 per cent), while another encouraging feature was the steady growth of freight traffic on Mediterranean routes.

Writing in the current issue of the *B.E.A. Magazine*, the chief executive, Mr. Peter Masefield, points out that expenditure has risen by 20 per cent (£600,000) above that of the first five months of the previous financial year, although 33 per cent more flying was done. He also emphasizes that the Corporation has to face some heavy future expenditure in the construction of the new maintenance base at London Airport and the introduction of Elizabethan-class aircraft (Ambassadors).

He considers that B.E.A. is now approaching the maximum