



CIVIL AVIATION

PARIS VISITOR: On March 12th the Armstrong Whitworth Apollo made its first journey outside the United Kingdom—a proving flight to Paris. The trip from Baginton airfield, Coventry, to Orly, took 1 hr. 26 min. while the return flight was made in 1 hr. 18 min. The Apollo, which was awarded a C. of A. on January 1st, is expected to make further proving flights to Zurich, Geneva and Brussels during the next few months.

A FEATURE printed recently in a London newspaper, and having the appearance of an officially inspired announcement, caused some surprise by implying that the Brabazon might be used by B.E.A. on the London-Paris passenger service. There is at present no more than a germ of truth in this premature suggestion. The position as we understand it must be prefaced by a series of "ifs." If suitable financial arrangements could be made between B.E.A. and the Ministry of Supply; if a full C. of A. were applied for and issued for the Brabazon Mk 1 (or presumably the Mk 2, or both); if the research and other duties of the aircraft permitted it; if arrangements could also be made for crewing and for servicing the Brabazon, and providing it with the requisite aids and equipment; and if fittings, including high-density furnishing, could be installed, then B.E.A. would be interested in the possibility of hiring one or both of these machines for use at peak times of the year on high-density routes such as London to Paris.

Peak Saturday travel in the summer holiday months has a potential of several thousand passengers a day to the most popular destinations, and the use of very high capacity aircraft on just those peak days has obvious attractions. B.E.A. state that so far no detailed discussions have taken place. As there is no possibility of any Brabazon being available with a C. of A. before the summer of 1952 at the earliest, there seems to be plenty of time to consider the matter before opening serious negotiations.

These considerations apart, we like the idea of using these impressive giants for services between European capitals, and have no doubt that passengers would thoroughly enjoy the experience of flying in them.

THE B.E.A. CHAIRMANSHIP

THE Minister of Civil Aviation has announced that the term of appointment of Lord Douglas of Kirtleside as chairman of B.E.A. has been extended until March 13th, 1954. Lord Douglas' original appointment, which was dated March 14th, 1949, was for three years and his term has thus been extended to cover a five-year period. The chairman of B.O.A.C. holds his office for a similar term.

U.A.L.'s PROFITABLE YEAR

AMERICA'S second largest internal operators, United Air Lines, have again enjoyed a satisfactory year. The company's net earnings for 1950 totalled almost \$6,500,000, which compares with the net profit in 1949 of \$2,250,000,000. For the first time in any year United realized more than \$100,000,000 in revenue. While operating expenses also reached a new maximum of \$91,000,000 unit costs were reduced.

Improved efficiency and a higher volume of traffic were reflected in the reduced operating cost per revenue ton-mile—of 45.6 cents, as compared with 50.3 in 1949, and 54.6 cents in 1948. As a result of increased earnings, United's board of directors declared a 75 per cent dividend on the Corporation's common stock—the first since 1946.

The principal traffic results for the year were: revenue passenger-miles flown, 1,494,876,664, revenue passengers carried, 2,492,497. The revenue passenger load-factor achieved was 69 per cent, a gain of 1.9 per cent on the figure for the previous year.

Although a major factor contributing to this improvement of United's traffic was considered to be the increased industrial activity caused by the Korean situation, it is nevertheless recognized that results were in some measure due to the public's increasing acceptance of air transport.

Because of competition, United entered the air-coach market on the Pacific coast early last year, using 66-passenger DC-6s.

Steady expansion of this type of traffic has been maintained, but the company is by no means certain that this type of travel will prove entirely beneficial to operating results. It has yet to be decided whether the question of diverting from standard services to maintain the required high load-factors under intense competition at lower rates is fully justified. It will be recalled that last September the C.A.B., recognizing the extent of the problem, ordered that all "coach" rates should maintain a level of at least 4½ cents per passenger-mile and that they should continue to be restricted to off-peak hours.

On the subject of air freight, United feels that although the actual growth of traffic in this category during the year was satisfactory, most of the rates currently being charged are still unrealistically low.

I.A.T.A.'s DEPUTY DIRECTOR

I.A.T.A.'s newly appointed Deputy Director-General, M. Stephane P. Thouvenot, took over his new duties at the Association's Montreal headquarters last week. He will assist Sir William Hildred, the present Director-General.



M. Thouvenot

Formerly the Director of Air Navigation and Transportation in the French Ministry of Transport, M. Thouvenot was appointed to his new office on January 1st. He has spent the last two months in Europe familiarizing himself with the work of the I.A.T.A. traffic conferences, with which he will be particularly concerned.

M. Thouvenot, who holds the rank of General in the Armée de l'Air, is best known for his work in creating a maintenance and repair base for the French Air Force in North Africa during the last war. After the liberation he was appointed Director of the Department of Aeronautical Production, later in his career

becoming Director of Air Transport.

In various capacities M. Thouvenot has taken part in many international negotiations and in recent years has assisted in the drafting of many bilateral agreements between France and other nations. He is a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour and holds the Médaille de l'Aéronautique. He is also an experienced pilot.

EDINBURGH-LONDON SERVICE

THE chairman of the Scottish Advisory Council on Civil Aviation, Sir Patrick Dollan, has now been officially informed of the reinstatement of B.E.A.'s Edinburgh-London service, around which controversy has recently arisen.

With effect from April 16th these flights will consist of one morning and one evening service on the southbound route and a mid-day and an evening flight in the northbound direction. It will be recalled that the morning and evening services were cancelled last November and at the end of February the remaining direct services were completely suspended for a week for "technical reasons".

B.E.A. has said that, if there is a demand for additional services during the Edinburgh Festival every endeavour will be made to meet the situation. Meanwhile it is hoped that Edinburgh traffic will build up enough to warrant the provision of three scheduled services during the spring, summer and autumn seasons.