



CIVIL AVIATION . . .

(2), Constellation (2), Convair 240 (2), DC-3 (11), DC-4 (1), DC-6 (1), DC-6B (2), North Star (1), Stratocruiser (1) and Super Constellation (1). The relatively high proportion of DC-3 accidents is attributable to the fact that this veteran type is still operated in greater numbers than any other.

According to our calculations, the number of scheduled flights made in 1954 was nearly 2,200,000. On this basis, the ratio of accidents involving fatalities to safely completed flights was about 1:90,000. This estimate is approximate, but it is probably as realistic as any other rule-of-thumb method of indicating the passenger's risk of being involved in a fatal accident on boarding a scheduled flight selected at random in 1954.

The yardstick most frequently used to express progress in airline safety is "passenger fatalities per 100 million passenger-miles." This is quite useless as a means of assuring the man-in-the-street that flying is "safe." It does, however, enable the incidence of fatal casualties to be plotted and compared over a period of years. The passenger-fatalities/100m-passenger-miles index for I.A.T.A. carriers dropped from 3.28 in 1948 to 1.41 in 1952.

Using this index as a basis of comparison, it can be shown that U.S. domestic airlines have a consistently better safety record than European regional services, and that the safety record for Europe is better than for the rest of the world, North America excluded. These conclusions are drawn from statistics covering a period of several years, and are not necessarily true for any given year; in 1954, for example, intra-European airline services probably achieved a better safety record (on the basis of deaths per 100m passenger-miles) than the American domestic carriers.

Detailed analysis of accident statistics is a task best left to the professional statistician. Comparisons between aircraft and other methods of transport form a particularly complex field, in which even statisticians fear to tread. On a passenger-deaths/passenger-miles basis it will normally be found that railways have a much better safety record than airlines, and that airlines in their turn have a better record than road transport, if private cars are included.

This is only one basis of comparison, however, and it gives a very incomplete picture. It takes no account of the fact that non-fatal injuries are many times more frequent on rail and road than in air accidents; that road accidents kill thousands of people other than passengers; and that the average passenger-mileages of trains, aircraft and cars vary enormously.

The risk taken by the individual passenger by air, rail or road must depend on the number of occasions on which he exposes himself to the possibility of an accident. The "exposure" factor, so far as air travel is concerned, implies a relationship between the number of flights made and the possibility of accidental death in a given period. Nevertheless, it may be noted that an identical risk of being involved in an accident is taken by all the passengers on any one flight, regardless of the number of other flights each has made individually.

One inference may reasonably be drawn from airline accident statistics: the degree of risk taken seems barely sufficient to justify the qualms felt by so many air travellers—knowledgeable and otherwise. Psychologists might be able to explain this apprehension, which should by now have almost disappeared from so commonplace and firmly established a form of transport.

Los Angeles provides a crowded background to this study of a T.C.A. Super Constellation. Below the aircraft is the "superhighway" which is intended to afford fast, uninterrupted travel through the city.

U.S. AIRLINES CARRY 34 MILLION

SCHEDULED airlines of the United States carried nearly 34.7m passengers last year, according to figures issued by the C.A.A. This represents 60 per cent of the total number of passengers on all scheduled services outside Russia and China. The U.S. domestic trunk lines, which carried some 28m, reported total earnings of £350m, an increase of 9.8 per cent over the 1953 figure.

PAKISTAN EXPRESS

FEBRUARY 1st will see the inauguration of Pakistan International Airlines' weekly Super Constellation service between Karachi and London. Scheduled flying time for the new service is 17½ hr, making it the fastest link between the two cities. The Super Constellations will stop only once for refuelling—at Cairo—on the 4,000-mile route. The aircraft will be flown by British and Australian pilots. Pakistani crews are under training for the airline. A proving flight from Karachi was due at London Airport yesterday; among those expected to be aboard was Mr. M. F. McGregor, the Canadian general manager of P.I.A.

B.E.A. DISPUTE: THE LAST WORD?

A STATEMENT issued jointly by B.E.A. and the trades union side of the National Joint Council explains that, contrary to initial reports, the Corporation is not at this stage withdrawing the document which the 306 recently dismissed employees were required to sign on re-engagement. The document drew attention to the need to abide by agreed methods of negotiating labour disputes. It will later be replaced by a new document drawn up jointly by B.E.A. and the Joint Council. Mr. J. Peters, the shop steward who was the central figure in the dispute involving the dismissals, has lost three appeals against his own dismissal.

INDIA-U.S. AVIATION DISCUSSIONS

INDIA and America have resumed negotiations on the subject of a bilateral air service agreement. The previous agreement, which was due to expire on January 14th, was regarded in India as detrimental to the national airline in that it allowed American companies practically unrestricted traffic rights between Europe and India. The new agreement is expected to contain a clause permitting India to restrict American traffic rights.

Earlier it had been reported that the United States Department of Commerce was withholding export licences for three Super Constellations ordered for Air-India International on the grounds that they might be used on services to Communist China.

On January 6th, however, Mr. Dulles, U.S. Secretary of State, announced the approval of an export licence for the first of the three Super Constellations. Licences for the two others would be approved, he said, when the aircraft were ready for delivery in February and March. There was nothing in the sales agreement, he added, to prevent the use of the aircraft for flights to China.

Shown about to leave D.H. Canada's plant at Ontario is a Beaver ordered for Aerovias Rojas of Tutila, Mexico. Capt. Murillo, its Mexican ferry pilot, is being wished Godspeed by S. Prado, resident consul for Mexico, and Mr. Dickens, the makers' sales director.

