

CUNARD AND "BRITISH EAGLE"

LAST Monday Eagle Aviation, hitherto the only one of Britain's "big five" independents with no shipping interests behind them, became part of the Cunard Steamship Company. Cunard announced "agreement in principle" to acquire a controlling interest in the Eagle group of companies. Sir John Brocklebank, the shipping line's chairman, said his company was aiming to buy "more than a 50 per cent" interest in Eagle, who would trade under their own identity with Cunard offices in Europe, the US and Canada augmenting their existing sales organizations.

It became known last week that the Eagle holding company, Harold Bamberg Holdings, had increased its share capital to £1m, and had changed its name to British Eagle International Airways. This is the name under which the Bermuda and Bahamas associates will henceforth trade; an application to the CAB has been applied for. There are no plans for the UK companies to trade under the new name.

Eagle are well established in Bermuda and the Bahamas, with Viscounts serving Miami, New York, Washington and Montreal, and they have a 2½-year-old application outstanding for London-Bermuda (*Flight*, January 29). Their acquisition of a Britannia "for evaluation" from Cubana (*Flight* last week) may have been with this route in mind.

FIRST ARGOSY ORDER

MORE information is now available about Trans Arabia Airways' decision to buy two Argosies, as reported in these pages last week. It is the first confirmed order for AWA's four-Dart freighter-coach. An option on a third aircraft has been placed. The order is worth £1.1m and delivery will be made, according to the official statement, "later this year." Presumably formal acceptance will not be possible until completion of the certification programme, now expected when route-proving is completed in June. It is believed that Trans Arabia will make a major contribution to the route-proving of the Argosy, and negotiations have, it is understood, been under way for an aircraft to be delivered to them during May for this purpose.

The general manager of Trans Arabia, Capt R. G. Gibson, reckons that the Argosy will cut turn-round time by 60 per cent, and he says that on all his airline's routes it will operate with a mixed freight and passenger layout. "Our traffic is expanding

rapidly," he says, "and the Argosy will offer air freight facilities to shippers of bulky cargo such as automobiles."

BOAC COMET INCIDENTS

SOON after last week's issue went to press it became known that the BOAC Comet 4 G-APDS, which was severely damaged at Madrid on the night of March 14, hit high ground before landing.

BOAC are not yet prepared to disclose the cause or the circumstances of the incident, but it is believed that the aircraft was in the circuit at Barajas Airport preparatory to landing on Runway 23L (8,530ft). This calls for a right-hand circuit, and is not the main instrument runway, which is 33 (10,006ft). Whilst at a distance of about two miles from Runway 23 the aircraft struck the top of a ridge 345ft above airport level. Though the commander (Capt N. A. Mervyn-Smith) did not know this at the time, both main bogie wheel assemblies were torn off, as was the port pod tank. The incident occurred in darkness, so it is presumed that the tower was unable to report on the extent of the damage. The aircraft was then landed on Runway 33, alighting on the stubs of the main gear and the undamaged nosewheels. None of those on board, who included 24 in addition to the flight crew, suffered injury. It is believed that the aircraft is repairable, though it is severely damaged.

This is the fourth incident to a BOAC Comet 4 in the landing or approach phase in nine months. The last one occurred at Rome on December 23, when G-APDL was landed with its wheels retracted. This was attributed by BOAC to pilot error (*Flight*, March 4, page 323). The two other incidents, the circumstances and causes of which have never been disclosed by BOAC, were: (1) On June 9, 1959, G-APDA (Capt Hart) overshot the runway at Calcutta Dum Dum, having hit a tree on its first approach, causing damage to the flaps. On the second approach the aircraft over-ran the runway. There were no injuries. [Source: *Lloyd's List*.] (2) In the same month, on June 21, 1959, Comet 4 G-APDB (Capt J. A. Kelly) struck a 10ft steel jet-blast barrier while landing in daylight and perfect visibility at New York International Airport. Damage was caused to the flaps and undercarriage but the aircraft landed safely and there were no injuries. [Source: *Lloyd's List*.] In no case, it is understood, were the incidents attributable to any malfunctioning of the aircraft or engines.

BREVITIES

TCA is offering as a package sale its 21 North Stars, spares and ground equipment.

Empressa Aerovias Venezolanas have ordered a Convair 880 for delivery late next year. The airline is 30 per cent owned by PanAm.

A new record for IATA clearing house transactions was established in 1959, when turnover for the year was over £360m.

Ansett-ANA are reported to have taken an option on the first six Super Broussards to come off the production line.

It is reported from Cairo that the United Arab Republic intends to open routes from Cairo to Ghana and to South America from May 1.

Aer Lingus services have been sharply curtailed by a dispute involving 120 pilots. Some of the services have been flown by executive pilots and aircraft have also been chartered from other companies.

Icelandic Airlines, which since 1952 has operated DC-4s on cut-rate services between New York and Europe over Iceland, is reported to have bought two DC-6Bs from Pan American.

A two-day symposium on *Helicopters—Their Capabilities and Economics* is to be held at the Polytechnic, Regent Street, London, on Friday and Saturday, April 8 and 9. The fee is 3gns and individual or group enrolment is invited.

Continental Airlines are negotiating to purchase a fifth Boeing 707-124.

Lufthansa's jet services started on March 17 with the first of their Boeing 707-420 flights to New York from Hamburg via Frankfurt.

East African Airways made a provisional operating profit of £34,000 in 1959.

Japan's Civil Aviation Bureau has given tentative approval to All Nippon Airways for the purchase of three Fokker Friendships. Delivery would be in the spring of 1961.

Boeing 720Bs and 120Bs are to have normal thrust-reversers in the tailpipes of their Pratt & Whitney Turbofans plus a device to reverse the cold exhaust of the fan. No further details have yet been issued.

BEA's Viscounts are to operate regular daily scheduled services into Speke for the first time from April 1. They will be used on the Liverpool - Isle of Man and Liverpool - Belfast routes, on which the corporation is offering nearly 50 per cent greater capacity this year.

BEA's DC-3s are being progressively sold and none should be left in service by 1962. According to Lord Douglas, BEA's chairman, they are fetching prices of between £17,000 and £23,000. This is the first time that either corporation has quoted a price for its used aircraft.

A New Zealand delegation is to visit Paris in order to negotiate a new air agreement with France; the existing arrangement expires in July. The conference will discuss the rights of TEAL to fly into Papeete in French Tahiti and French rights to operate into Auckland.

The FAA has issued its first annual report. In it the administrator, E. R. Quesada, says that the Federal Aviation Act—after a year of operation—has been shown to be "basically sound in concept and workable in practice." The report is published by the US Government Printing Office, Washington 25, DC, price 30 cents.

The administrator has also been quoted as saying recently that experience with jets and some turboprops showed differences between certification standards and actual operating performance—"take-off and landing distances in flight manuals [are] not being achieved and greater-than-expected operating speeds . . . [are] forcing operators to introduce arbitrary margins to cater for these differences."

An Arab airline was one of the projects approved at the meeting in Cairo earlier this month of the economic council of the Arab League. According to a report in *The Times*, capital will be £17m, and the project will be considered by a committee which will report to the May meeting of the council. Together with other matters approved at the meeting (including the establishment of an Arab common market "within ten years") the proposed Arab airline will now be considered by the various governments.

Undergoing trials by PanAm at Miami is this Lockheed palletized cargo loading system with the unhappy name of Jet PAAk. Seven can be installed in an Intercontinental Boeing 707 and 4½ tons of freight can be loaded in under ten minutes. The weight penalty is about 1,270lb

