

## AIR COMMERCE . . .

## SELL AND REMEMBER

**A** PREREQUISITE of the sale of a commercial aircraft to a new customer is for the manufacturer to explain exactly what he intends to provide in the way of after-sales service. Then the object must be to provide that service and nothing less.

At a recent meeting at Baginton, attended by Capt R. G. Gibson and M. Ebbett, respectively general manager and chief engineer of Trans Arabia Airways, and by the representatives of 18 major sub-contractors to the Argosy, Armstrong Whitworth undertook to establish a parts stores at Beirut, with the object of providing over-the-counter service to Trans Arabia for all AWA-manufactured parts required to keep the Argosies flying. In addition "almost all" the sub-contractors represented at the meeting have agreed to provide a 24hr AOG service, either by locating stocks in Beirut, or by guaranteed delivery from London within 24hr.

Thus it seems that AWA are determined to learn from the past experience—and from the mistakes—of manufacturers older in the business of selling commercial aircraft abroad than themselves. Ample evidence of this determination is provided in the recently published second edition of their After Sales Service brochure for the Argosy.

This booklet covers in some detail the many services to be provided to the customer after sale, field service, airport handling in the overhaul and loading bays, customer training, technical publications, X-ray inspection, warranties and service instructions.

For parts service a relatively simple system of provisioning cards, coloured pink, yellow or green, to indicate the degree of anticipated usage, has been introduced for the small operator. These cards, used in conjunction with a fully illustrated catalogue of replaceable parts and a set of microfilmed drawings, are supported by a carefully controlled modification record system. This should give the operator a comprehensive picture of the Argosy parts breakdown for provisioning and re-ordering purposes. A more advanced parts provisioning and ordering system, developed to ATA 200, is intended for larger operators possessing data processing equipment.

AWA further intend to maintain an "off-the-shelf" parts service, which should enable them to provide the guaranteed delivery so important to the commercial operator. A list at the back of the brochure covers the after-sales services which are available for the ancillary equipment in the Argosy. There are more than one hundred manufacturers on this list, and it is the availability of the washers, springs, seals, brushes, etc, for their products which will ultimately prove the success or failure of AWA's carefully laid plans.

Further encouraging news is that the Air Ministry have adopted AWA's provisioning scheme for the 660, and that Short Brothers & Harland are thinking along the same lines for the Britannic. This could be a pointer to the direction to be taken by the whole industry.

**Footnote:** "Sell and Remember" is the title of the release accompanying AWA's new brochure. An article on after-sales service in the industry, "Sell and Forget?", appeared in *Flight*, October 16, 1959.

## WHEN PRESSURE FAILURE THREATENS

**T**HERE can be no indecision when pressurization failure appears likely; the only safe recourse is in immediate descent to a lower altitude. This was the situation which on April 3 faced an Air France pilot in a Boeing 707 with 55 passengers and seven crew on board when 25min out from Paris on a flight to New

York. The aircraft was at 23,000ft when the captain discovered a crack in the laminations of his windshield. He decided immediately to spill the cabin pressure and to descend as quickly as possible to 10,000ft. Drop-down oxygen masks were ejected from their containers and the hostesses and stewards helped the passengers to don them, only to be overcome themselves by lack of oxygen before they could regain their own seats and apply their masks. They were unconscious for about two minutes but revived at the lower altitude. Some of the passengers were said to be slightly affected by the rarefied air and some experienced bleeding from the ears, due to the rapid changes of pressure.

The aircraft returned to Paris but was not able to land immediately because of a faulty fuel dump valve; 10,000gal of fuel had to be burned off before the 707 was down to landing weight.

## VANGUARD CALYPSO

**U**PON the aspirations of the West Indies for its flag carrier BWIA will depend the type of aircraft to be ordered by the Federation. As recorded in a paragraph on these pages on March 4, the airline is shopping for a US jet with which it hopes to capitalize on the forthcoming tourist boom to the Caribbean. But BWIA also have hopes—when independence is achieved, perhaps less than two years hence—of becoming transatlantic operators, and it is with such services in mind that equipment decisions are being taken. First in line is probably the Convair 600.

How do these plans accord with BOAC's whole ownership of the Federation's airline? Or the recent sales tour to the West Indies by the British turboprop Vanguard?

While the corporation retain their interest in BWIA, there seems little likelihood that the agreement of BOAC Associated Companies will be given to the purchase of foreign equipment without which, the Federation argues, these long-term aspirations cannot be brought to fruition, although BOAC might operate transatlantic services for them. So the choice confronting BWIA and the Federation may be either to develop existing services in association with BOAC while moving towards an autonomous West Indian airline, or to swing away from BOAC altogether and branch out—either on their own or in association with another operator—into intercontinental services. Another suggestion is for a compromise partnership, with majority shares to be taken by BOAC and possibly by TCA, with the remainder of the capital being found by the Federation.

If long-haul jet services are BWIA's aim, the present network of regional Caribbean services might suffer from the new operation and from the employment on these island routes of jets purchased primarily for longer hauls. The Vanguard fits into this picture as perhaps the most suitable aeroplane for the inter-Caribbean routes and as a vehicle for offering low fares on services to the USA. For BWIA it would be the natural follow-on type with which to replace their Viscount fleet and no doubt its purchase (or lease) would readily be endorsed by BOAC.

In Trinidad between March 22 and 26 the Vanguard demonstrated its regional capability to the airline's working management (although not to the chairman, H. O. B. Wooding, or the general manager J. H. Rahr, who were attending a BOAC associate's meeting in London), and to government officials, public notabilities, representatives of other airlines, travel agents and others. The most significant day was probably March 25 when 60 people and 10,000lb of freight were flown from Piarco to Barbados and Antigua back to Piarco—1,000 miles of inter-island flying—in three hours' total block time. Take-off from Antigua's 5,000ft runway was made at ISA+17°. After checking out on the Vanguard on March 24, BWIA captains flew it under Vickers supervision throughout the following day.

## BREVITIES

Yugoslavia became the 77th member-State of ICAO on April 8.

Aer Lingus' Dublin - Yeoman service was inaugurated on Saturday, April 2.

The first five Convair 540s for Allegheny Airlines will be converted by the Garrett Corporation's AiResearch Aviation Service Division at Los Angeles International Airport.

The Handley Page Dart Herald now being demonstrated in Brazil has curtailed its programme to carry clothing and medical supplies from Recife to the flooded Fortaleza area 800 miles away.

In a written parliamentary reply Duncan Sandys, Minister of Aviation, has said that the average noise pressure-level of the Comet 4B was 90 decibels, a figure which was exceeded by several piston-engined airliners regularly operating at night.

Last Monday the Minister of Aviation was to be asked "whether he is aware of the unsatisfactory nature of the investigation into the accident to G-AMZD, a Transair DC-3, in Spain . . . and whether he will consider publishing a more detailed report."

A paper on "Power Plants for Supersonic Transport" is to be read in the central hall of the Hatfield Technical College by J. S. Alford, AFRAE, design engineer of the General Electric Company on May 11. The occasion is the second Halford lecture.

In Boeing's 1959 annual report, recently issued, it is said in the section concerning the Transport Division that "the company has sustained a very substantial loss on [Boeing 707] orders received to date."

Formal approval was given on April 1 to BOAC for its polar route to Los Angeles. On the same day Air France was formally granted permission to operate into Los Angeles.

The FAA has proposed that all US turboprops as well as turbojet airliners should be equipped with aluminium or steel-strip flight recorders, said to cost about £1,000 each.

Olympic Airways have ordered a fourth Comet 4B only two weeks after the decision to purchase a third was announced. Comet 4s now on order or delivered total 48. It was reported last week that RAF Transport Command may buy 10 Comet 4Cs.

One of BEA's Pionair DC-3s has been sold to Martins Air Charter, the Schiphol-based Dutch independent. Since January others have been sold to East Anglian Flying Services, Travelair Southern Rhodesia and Cambrian.

American Airlines' earnings last year of 7 per cent on invested capital "were not enough," according to the airline's president, C. R. Smith. For financial stability and to enable the airlines to continue to improve services, he said, a return on invested capital of 10-12 per cent was required.