



"Flight International" photograph

Passengers alight from the BKS Hawker Siddeley 748 which flew the first turboprop service to serve Northern Spain, at Bilbao last week. The hills seen behind the terminal building extend on all sides of the airport, which BKS has previously served with DC-3s

to St Just); and, of course, the enormously higher engineering charges.

An airline like New York Airways, with overheads spread over nine machines, reckons to break even at 5hr daily utilization per aircraft and a load factor of 58 per cent. This would achieve break-even without the CAB subsidy that covers 46 per cent of NYA's operating costs and the £1 a ton-mile mail rate which is a hidden subsidy. BEA's helicopter operations, with one S-61N working 3½hr a day on Land's End-Scillies backed up by its sister ship, Gatwick-based, working as hard as the BEA-charter salesmen can make it, are obviously not going to make a profit at foreseeable fare-rates, year-round load factors and utilizations.

It would have been very easy for BEA to have closed down their helicopter unit years ago, writing it off as an expensive luxury and going instead after profits. This they have not done, to their credit—and also to that of the Ministry of Aviation. There was, perhaps, special meaning in that part of Lord Balfour's inaugural address where he said he looked forward to a "continued close partnership" with the Ministry.

At the moment BEA will not predict the next stage in the helicopter programme which, setbacks and disappointments regardless—especially in the development of a suitable British machine—they have pressed through to the point where at last a real public service can be opened.

Out with the old and in with the new—the Rapides did a wonderful job, and it was sad to break the link with the days of the Great Western & Southern Air Lines and the camouflaged, Hurricane-escorted operations of 1939-1945. But the S-61Ns will do an even more wonderful job; and the unsentimental outlook was summed up by the BEA Rapide pilot who, after switching off after the last flight in, was asked by a passenger: "The last one, Jim?"—"Yes, and it's my last flight in one of these I suppose—been flying them since 1936."

748 TO BILBAO

ON Thursday last week BKS Air Transport re-opened their seasonal route to Bilbao, the important industrial centre in Northern Spain, with a Hawker Siddeley 748. Previously the service, started in 1956, has been operated with DC-3s. Flight time for the journey is reduced from 3½hr to 2½hr and is expected to result in a further growth in traffic, which doubled last year when the frequency was increased to twice a week. The 748 will make the journey every Monday and Friday until the end of October.

A representative of this journal was among the party of 20 guests flown to Bilbao to inaugurate the turboprop service, the first into Northern Spain. His illustrated report will appear next week.

GASHOLDER LANDING SYSTEM

UNDER the above heading a note in *Flight* for November 4, 1960, recorded how Capt W. Beall of PAA said "It was a once-in-a-lifetime mistake" after landing his 707 on runway 26 at Northolt instead of on runway 23L at Heathrow. Flying into the sun he had mistaken the South Harrow gasholder for the relatively similar one at Southall.

Three-and-a-half years later, on April 28, 1964, a Lufthansa 727 captain would have made the same mistake but for the vigilance and prompt warning of London approach radar. When a mistake like this occurs twice the natural reaction is to blame London ATC, but there was no accident the second time because ATC was on the ball, as it might well not have been at airports without this one's reputation.

Runway 23 is used too little to justify ILS, which in any case

would crowd frequencies, and there is always NDB NE334 available to show that a 260° steer is not a 230° steer. The only thing that ought to be done, and which the Ministry of Aviation's safety people ought perhaps to have had done in 1960, is differential labelling of the two gasholders.

KELLY-ROGERS WAS THERE

OPPORTUNITIES of hearing personal accounts of aeronautical trail-blazing get fewer year by year. It is, therefore, surprising that a mere 20 people (and this total included a visiting American and his wife) turned up at the Royal Aeronautical Society on April 27 to hear Captain Kelly-Rogers, now deputy general manager of Aer Lingus, talk on *Atlantic Flying of Twenty-five Years Ago* on an "I was there" basis. Reference to page 28 of *Flight* for January 12, 1939, will disclose a photograph captioned "Atlantic Commander: Captain J. C. Kelly-Rogers is the first pilot of the modified 'C' class boats to be appointed by Imperial Airways for work on the Atlantic mail experiments this year. He will probably be put in charge of *Cabot* when this boat makes the inaugural crossing in June."

The Historical Group of the RAeS (writes one who was present) is to be congratulated on the timing of this lecture, which proved to be one of the most interesting it has held—though in view of the size of the audience, the chairman and secretary of the group, not to mention the lecturer, must now be wondering whether the effort of preparing a programme is worth their while. A written paper would be just as valuable to posterity and a lecturer would not have to take the trouble to travel from Dublin for the doubtful pleasure of talking to an audience of less than one-tenth the capacity of the lecture theatre. Those who were not there will never know what they missed—an engrossing talk by a modest and captivating speaker.

Il-18s for Air Algeria? It is reported that Air Algeria has acquired two Il-18s for its Algiers - Moscow service.

—And for Biggin Hill A Malev Il-18 is to be open for public inspection at the Biggin Hill Air Fair, May 8-10.

Three US SST Places each have been reserved by Delta and Iberia, bringing reservations with the FAA up to 84.

Kuwait Airways have bought Trans Arabian Airways, the Beirut-based Kuwaiti company which operates three DC-6Bs.

UK Airport Authority This week the legislation for an independent UK airport authority, forecast in the 1961 white paper, is due to be tabled in the Commons.

727s for SAA? Unconfirmed reports as this issue goes to press state that South African Airways have decided to order five Boeing 727s. Lufthansa are also reported likely to increase their fleet of 12 727s by up to five.

ICAO in 1963 ICAO's annual report for 1963, due to be published shortly, says the scheduled airlines of 103 nations made an operating profit of £59m, and increased their traffic l.t.ms by 12 per cent—the average 1953-1962 annual growth-rate.

MEA Trident Overhaul Hawker Siddeley and MEA have agreed to establish a Trident maintenance and 24hr spares depot at MEA Engineering's Beirut base. Although MEA have not ordered Tridents, they will presumably overhaul the aircraft ordered by the Kuwaiti and Iraqi airlines.