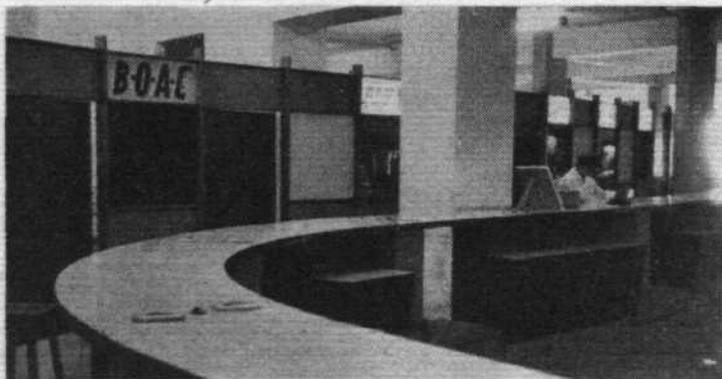


## AIR COMMERCE . . .

Right, three crews and two Ministry flight inspectors accompanied the first proving flight to Rio on October 12-14. Normal crew is two pilots, a navigator and a flight engineer. Below, the deserted BOAC counter at Galeão



of the VC10. Two refinements have been thought up already: to get better lift out of African airports in the noon-day sun a new  $14\frac{1}{2}^\circ$  flap setting (compared with  $20^\circ$  normal) has been approved, and Dunlop are producing 220 m.p.h. tyres to replace the existing 200 m.p.h. specimens. The proving flight to Rio provided an opportunity to measure fuel consumptions at different speeds and heights, so perhaps the 6,700kg/hr overall average on the 7hr 24min Las Palmas - Rio leg was not typical. But it

was fascinating to hear BUA crews talking about their new aircraft. "It is a British-type aeroplane, wonderfully strong with masses of power," said one captain. "The things I have seen test pilots do to this aeroplane are nobody's business." It flies fast high up, 30kt more than Brand X in the mini-cost condition, and slowly low down—20kt less than Brand X, as slowly as the Britannia (in fact BUA's VC10 minima at Gatwick are 800yd and 300ft, the same as for the Brit). It requires no nosewheel steering on take-off and no Mach trim in the cruise; it can be hand-flown up to Mach .99 (nine nine) in level flight, and has been supersonic in a shallow dive with scarcely any buffet or trim change. One pilot said it is the "best thing the British aircraft industry has ever done." In a speech in Rio Mr Laker said: "We have brought with us the fabulous VC10—the smoothest, the most comfortable, the most docile, the most gentle, the safest and the greatest aeroplane in civil aviation today."

British United do not imagine that South America will provide them with a sheltered anchorage. They are doing the service because, to quote Mr Laker, "We were the right firm with the right aeroplane and the right finance at the right time." The only quibble here might be with the matter of timing. The new Minister, Mr Roy Jenkins, can still stop this service, and subsidize BOAC to do it. But if he is wise he will allow that Britain has a private airline equipped and ready to have a go at doing a job more efficiently than a State corporation. J.M.R.

## BEA SEEK MORE FARE INCREASES

AS this issue went to press it was expected that next week's ATLB Licensing Notice will publish an application from BEA for across-the-board increases in domestic fares of about five per cent.

This is BEA's fifth application to increase domestic fares in the last three years. A 10-20 per cent increase in Channel Island fares was approved in 1962; a 5-10 per cent increase in internal fares was introduced in April 1963; a further  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent increase in these fares will be charged on November 1; and the corporation recently applied for "standby" fare increases of more than 10 per cent.

BEA, who made a net profit of £3m last year, can on past form expect the latest increases to be approved without demur by the ATLB, although there is reason to believe that the Board is not too favourably disposed towards granting the proposed increases in standby fares. These were opposed by British Eagle, and it will be interesting to see whether the independent refusés to go along with the latest applications.

## AIRLINE DISPUTE IN AUSTRALIA

THE Australian Government's decision to amend the Air Navigation Regulations to provide full Federal control over intra-state as well as inter-state services, to which its control was formerly confined, is to result in a legal battle. This decision became effective on October 10 and already the State of New South Wales has moved to take out a high court injunction to prevent Federal control of intra-state services, presumably because it is unconstitutional.

In the past the Commonwealth has exercised the right to regulate Australian air transport only with the voluntary approval of various states, but the present situation came to a head when the New South Wales government ordered a reallocation of routes, transferring some belonging to Airlines of New South Wales to East-West Airlines of Tamworth, in particular the lucrative Sydney - Dubbo route.

This transfer was to have been implemented on October 12, after Airlines of NSW had challenged this decision in court but had its appeal rejected earlier this year by the Privy Council. The airline's general manager, Capt S. C. Middlemiss, had earlier stated (according to *Interavia*) that his airline would ignore the State government's order, while East-West's chairman, D. M. Shand, has expressed his intention of starting services to Dubbo on October 12 despite the Commonwealth decision to take control of intra-state routes. The State government had directed East-West to take over the route from Airlines of NSW and his airline would, said Mr Shand, "abide by the law of the land." Following this impasse Senator Henty, Minister for Civil Aviation, has been having discussions with representatives of both airlines. Support by the courts for the Commonwealth decision taking over intra-state routes now being contested by the New South Wales government would make any proposed transfer of routes from Ansett subsidiary Airlines of NSW to East-West subject to Commonwealth approval. Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies has said that the Commonwealth planned to act in consultation with the states, and Mr R. M. Ansett has stated that he would not object to a "just and equitable" re-allocation of routes.