



Left, regional shares of Air France's grand total of passenger-kilometres, 1954-1965; the areas of the circles are proportional to traffic volume. Right, regional totals of passenger-kilometres for the same period

to Pointe Noire, using Sikorsky S.43 amphibians. These routes linked up with Air France's South American service at Dakar and with the former Air Afrique, thus forming an interconnected French African network.

The 1955 decision succeeded in its main objective. It was a semi-permanent piece of legislation, virtually free from the threat of a *volte-face* by the French Government—in striking contrast with the bizarre situation which prevailed in the United Kingdom, where the issues of State and private ownership, competition, and route franchises have been complicated by vacillation by successive governments, ministries, and even individual ministers under the same government.

The original 1955 agreement was effective for five years, and modified by further agreements in September 1959 (Madagascar) and April 1960 (French West and Equatorial).

**More African Local Routes Lost** Air France had already experienced the surrender of local routes in an earlier part of its post-war history. In the Far East its Indo-Chinese network had been transferred partly to Air Vietnam, founded on October 15, 1951, and partly to Air Laos the following year. In North Africa, the formation of Tunis Air in 1949 and the consolidation of Moroccan companies in February 1957 to form Air Maroc—later Royal Air Maroc—had made further inroads into the French company's annual passenger and passenger-mile totals. Air Algérie continued to carry a growing percentage of the trans-Mediterranean traffic, while provisions for a change in Madagascar were contained in the 1955 agreement with TAI (in addition to the reduction to 30 per cent of Air France's share in local services in French West and Equatorial Africa (see table).

But by far the biggest step came in 1961, overshadowing all

previous events in scope and in vision. The Treaty of Yaoundé was signed on March 28 of that year by 11 African States—all developing, independent countries, newly created by the refashioning of the French Empire into a modern French Union, free from the stigma of colonisation. The main purpose of the treaty was to create a new Air Afrique, reviving memories of the pre-war company, but promoted indigenously rather than by an absentee landlord. It was to be owned jointly by 11 States, with UAT and Air France (holding together 34 per cent of the stock) providing technical advice and operational assistance, including staff training, supply of equipment, and flying crews on a temporary basis.

Air Afrique (Société de Transports Aériens en Afrique) had first been registered in September 1960 by Air France and UAT. This company hardly passed the embryonic stage because, under the terms of a protocol to the Treaty of Yaoundé, it renounced its title and subsequently assumed the name Société pour le Développement du Transport Aérien en Afrique (SODETRAF). The constitutive assembly of the present-day Air Afrique was held on June 26, 1961. Internal routes were inaugurated on August 1, 1961, with a fleet of 12 DC-4s, bequeathed by the member-airlines. Long-haul services began on October 15, 1961, the first connecting Paris with Port Etienne, Dakar, Abidjan, Cotonou, and Douala, using an Air France L.1049G Super Constellation; the second service, on October 22, linked Paris, Nice, Douala, Libreville, and Port Gentil, with a UAT DC-6B. Jet equipment, still leased, was introduced on January 5, 1962, and Air Afrique ordered its own jets, two DC-8s, in December 1962.

The predecessors and associates of Air France had pioneered air transport across half of Africa. Air France itself, both before and after World War Two, had maintained progress

The world network of Air France and its associates

