

AIR TRANSPORT...

third member wants a fire extinguisher. When asked to support this requirement he quotes a case of a tent being set alight by a cooking stove.

It does not need much research to show that more people have died in the Arctic because they lost their way than have perished in tent fires. How much more sensible then was the suggestion to duplicate the navigational instruments, thereby reducing still further the chances of being lost.

Should not, therefore, legislation require higher standards of position-fixing equipment rather than the carriage of life-rafts? In the case of jumbo jets the weight of life-rafts for passengers and crew is in the order of 1,500lb. This weight is roughly equivalent to nine passengers at 170lb each—or perhaps £1,000 of lost revenue per Atlantic crossing. How much better it would be if this penalty were to be used for such items as: (a) continuous pictorial position presentation; (b) automatic landing systems; (c) terrain-scanning radar; (d) radio altimeters; or even (e) extra fuel.

The potential contribution to safety provided by these items is by no means the same in each case. However, the contribution of any one is likely to be greater than that obtained by the carriage of life-rafts. The last thing we want to do is to discard safety equipment merely because it is expensive or carries a weight penalty—but if a weight and cost penalty is to be incurred then let us ensure that it is incurred in the areas of greatest need. The carriage of life-rafts in modern transport aircraft is no longer of value. Aviation is constantly changing and the pressing need now is for the pilot to know his position immediately and continuously all the time his aircraft is airborne.

D. G. VEDEAN

DC-6B DOWN IN VIETNAM

AN Air Vietnam DC-6B on charter from Far Eastern Air Transport crashed near Nha Trang, about 190 n.m., 350km, north-east of Saigon on December 22, killing about 125 people in the aircraft and on the ground. American reports have indicated that 60 of the 58 passengers and eight crew aboard the aircraft died, as did another 25 in a market place in the path of the DC-6B. A Social Ministry official put the number of dead in the school at between 30 and 70. Government sources have indicated that the aircraft was returning to Nha Trang because of technical trouble; a survivor, however, reported an explosion in the cockpit.

ATLAS Finalises Maintenance An agreement has been reached whereby Air France will assume responsibility for the maintenance of airframes of the 747s of the ATLAS group. Lufthansa will specialise in engine overhaul, while Alitalia and Sabena will take care of systems and electrics. One, and possibly two, simulators to be installed in Frankfurt for common use will be run by Lufthansa. Iberia, not an ATLAS member, will also make use of them.

Lloyd Appointments Mr Michael Day is to become deputy chairman of Lloyd International Airways, and managing director of the holding company of the Lloyd International group, with effect from April 15. He is at present director of technical services for Malaysia Singapore Airlines. He will succeed Mr J. L. M. Crick, who is to remain on the board of the holding company and to continue as financial adviser. Mr D. L. Willis, assistant managing director of Lloyd International Airways, is to become the airline's deputy managing director; he will join the board of Lloyd Aircraft Services. Mr Norman Monnickendam, managing director of Lloyd Aircraft Services, will in addition become technical director of Lloyd International. The airline expects to start jet operations early in the year with a Boeing 707.

All Nippon Leases 727-200s Pacific Southwest is buying two more Boeing 727-200s, which will be leased to All Nippon. They will replace two PSA 727-100s already leased by the Japanese operator. Three other long-bodied 727s are at present on order by PSA for lease to All Nippon, and first deliveries should by now have been made.

Eastern Returns More 720s As part of an agreement to buy eight 727-200s, Eastern will return the last eight of 15 Boeing 720s to the manufacturer. Arrangements to return the first seven were made earlier last year.

Reporting points...

Scandinavian Airlines System At a meeting in Copenhagen on December 15, the SAS board of directors declared a profit of (equivalent) £6.7 million for the financial year ended September 30. This compares with a £6.9 million profit in the previous year. Total revenue for the year (1967-68 figures in brackets) was £143.6 million (£122.2 million), of which traffic revenue was £109.8 million (£94.8 million); total costs were £136.9 million (£115.3 million). The profit was arrived at after providing for depreciation of £12.3 million (£8.3 million).

SAS scheduled traffic was 19 per cent higher in 1968-69 than in the previous year, while capacity increased 20 per cent. The airline carried 4.6 million passengers, 10.4 per cent more than in 1967-68. Passenger load factor fell from 50.2 per cent in 1967-68 to 47.7 per cent last year.

Delta Air Lines Among the few airlines reporting an increased profit for the past financial year is Atlanta-based Delta. Although not the biggest US trunk carrier—it rates fifth—Delta has consistently turned in good profits, and in 1968-69 paid a cash dividend for the 20th consecutive year.

Its net profits rose from \$36.1 million (£15.1 million) in 1967-68 to \$39.2 million (£16.3 million) for the 12 months ending June 30, 1969 (an 8 per cent increase). Revenue increased 20 per cent to \$516 million (£215 million) but expenses increased only 19 per cent to \$434 million (£181 million).

A notable feature of Delta's year was that after seven successive years of declining fare yields the rate per passenger-mile went up by 2 per cent to 5.70 cents/mile. This increase resulted from the fare rounding-off which became effective in February 1968, and from the 4 per cent increase approved by the Civil Aeronautics Board in February this year.

Another favourable trend is that unit costs have not yet bottomed out: available ton-mile costs were down by 4 per cent and seat-mile costs by 3 per cent. However, passenger load factor declined from 59.4 per cent to 55.8 per cent (still high by US standards).

President Charles Dolson expects the decline in load factor to level out in the last half of the current financial year. He also expects "additional leverage" from the further increase in fares recently approved by the CAB. Dolson sums up the prospects for 1969-70 by commenting modestly that "some earnings growth is expected."

One reason for Delta's good performance in past years has been its monopoly position on the trans-continental routes from Atlanta to San Francisco and to Los Angeles, which have operated at very high load factors. As a result of a recent CAB decision in the "southern tier" case, Delta now faces competition on both these routes—but at the same time has won a couple of important new services: Miami-San Francisco and Miami-Houston.

	1968	1969	% change
Revenue (thousands)	\$431,562	\$516,113	+20
Expenses (thousands)	\$363,140	\$433,938	+19
Net profit (thousands)	\$ 36,134	\$ 39,191	+ 8
Revenue passengers	10.4m	12.1m	+17
Available seat-miles	12.0m	14.8m	+23
Revenue passenger-miles	7.1m	8.2m	+16
Passenger load factor	59.4%	55.8%	- 6
Cost per available seat-mile (cents)	3.03	2.94	- 3
Cost per available ton-mile (cents)	22.56	21.75	- 4