



BUA's present long-haul route network, operated by its VC10 fleet, except for the Lagos route, which is operated with One-Elevens. Frequencies are three times weekly to East Africa, once to Lagos and three times to South America

across the Atlantic (having applied for transatlantic scheduled services in 1967). The airline is still looking mainly westwards, although it is no longer eager for North Atlantic schedules in the present depressed and over-supplied state of that market. Mr Thomson says that he would be unlikely to contemplate North Atlantic services until 1973 or later.

In line with its requirements for future development, Caledonian is anxious to avoid "cul de sac" routes. The BUA route around the west coast of Africa as far as Lagos might be expected to fall into this category, for in the present political situation it could not be extended to South Africa. Lagos is already served direct from London by BOAC. East Africa is likewise served by both BOAC and BUA.

There is at present a good deal of opposition in Africa

ALIA, PIA JOIN FORCES

AN airline-operating consortium has been formed by Pakistan International Airlines and Alia Royal Jordanian Airlines. It is believed that it will operate the two Boeing 707-320Cs which Alia has ordered for delivery next year. *Flight* understands that the intention is to make the consortium in effect an airline in its own right, with its own name (yet to be chosen) and livery.

The permanent secretariat is to be established in Amman next month; the chairman of the consortium is Mr Bahjat Talhouni who is chairman of Alia, and the chief executives of the two constituent airlines will be joint managing directors. The executive director of the consortium will be nominated by PIA.

Operations are expected to include flights to Europe and South-east Asia, beginning next year.

MERGER RECOMMENDED

THE proposed merger between Northwest and Northeast airlines has been found to be "consistent with the public interest" by CAB examiner Mr Robert L. Park. He has therefore recommended that the board approve the deal, subject to accounting, rate-making and redundancy considerations. Mr Park noted that "despite the board's efforts to preserve Northeast as an independent entity and those of successive carrier managements to carry out that mandate, Northeast had been unable to make its own way as a viable airline." He concluded that, "by substituting a consistently healthy carrier (Northwest) for a habitually weak one," the proposed merger offered a

sound economic solution that did not upset the balance of the air-transport system. Mr Park said that Northwest would "unquestionably" be able to recover to profitability the Northeast operation and that the public would benefit from having a competitive airline rather than "a relatively ineffective carrier."

He refuted claims by competing airlines that some routes given to Northeast last year in an attempt to make it profitable should be denied to the new group. It would be, he said, "a strange construction of the public interest which would demand that Northeast bear all the burdens of the merger but be deprived of the potential it offers for economic growth."

to service by two British airlines, and pressure is building up, especially in East Africa, for national airlines to take a half share of the traffic. It would not be surprising if the second force left Africa entirely to BOAC in exchange for routes elsewhere.

In South America BUA has the old BOAC route down the west coast, while BOAC still operates to Caracas, Bogota and Lima, an operation which ties in closely with the corporation's important Caribbean and West Indian services and with New York—BA505 to Lima, for example, operates through New York and Nassau.

Nevertheless there might be scope for the second force in taking a mid-Atlantic route which could develop in the Caribbean, north-eastern South America, and later into central America and on to the Pacific. The central and western States of the USA are another important area for the second force, for they are still relatively sparsely served by BOAC.

BOAC's average revenue yield per capacity ton-mile in 1968-69 was 25.5d. At this rate, routes worth £6 million would amount to about 56 million CTMs a year, corresponding to perhaps 2.25 million aircraft miles. (BUA's existing VC10 scheduled routes consume rather more than 4.5 million aircraft-miles a year.) These figures suggest that one route of some 6,000 miles end-to-end, operated about four times a week, would fill the bill. The figures are necessarily broad approximations, but they do suggest that the route transfer, although representing an increase of perhaps 50 per cent to BUA's present VC10 long-haul operations, may be a good deal less than is widely supposed.

Combined capacity of BUA and Caledonian last year amounted to 394 million CTMs, against 1,826 million for BOAC. Total British production was 3,375 million. Mr Thomson said last week that he expected the second-force airline to reach the present size of BOAC (reckoned in CTMs) within five years, and that by the same yardstick it would by then be rather bigger than BEA.

As for equipment, Caledonian expects that in the early years of the second force more One-Eleven 500s would be bought, and possibly more Boeing 707s. The BAC Three-Eleven is described as "a certainty if it is built—we definitely want it." The order might be for three in the first year of production, three more soon afterwards, and more later. The 747 is also considered a strong possibility for the second-force fleet, but not at the outset. The present jet fleets of the two airlines combined would comprise four VC10s, seven 707s, 12 One-Eleven 500s and eight One-Eleven 200s.

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TMA Buys 707s Three Boeing 707-320Cs have been bought by Trans Mediterranean Airways from Braniff. The aircraft will be delivered next April. A similar aircraft is to be leased from Aer Lingus-Irish from October 1.

South African 748s From August 1, South African Airways increased its domestic services by 25 per cent by introducing 70 extra flights a week. Boeing 737 and Hawker Siddeley 748 services have been extended so that all domestic and most regional routes are now served by turbine-powered equipment. The 748 demonstrator has been on lease to SAA since last May. Sales of the aircraft to SAA are expected before the end of the year.