

AIR TRANSPORT...

The first HS. Trident 3B on the production line at Hatfield. Due to fly in November, this is the first of 26 for BEA. With a fuselage stretch of 16ft 5in and the addition of a tail-mounted Rolls-Royce booster engine, the 3B can carry up to 170 passengers on difficult routes which combine relatively long stages with airfields which are small, hot and high



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president of the largest non-Russian airline, and a domestic one at that—was of “catastrophic congestion on the ground and in the air in the 1970s.” One of his company’s lines of attack was through the preparation of “master plan reports” on each major town served by United, which are evidently brandished under the noses of each appropriate airport management until they show signs of doing something about it. \$2,500 million for airways and \$10,000 million for airports are the sums which, in the United view, must be mobilised in the USA during the next ten years.

The major part of the paper by Mr Keith Granville, managing director of BOAC, was on the familiar ground of the need for improved facilitation through airports and better communication between airports and towns. He had few novel proposals to make—except his plea for segregation of airport road traffic from general traffic, on special roads—but the airlines clearly feel that, unless they keep on shouting from

the housetops, no Government or airport authority is going to get anything done in time. They may have a point there.

Airport authorities also tend to get it in the neck from IATA. This was no exception: Mr Knut Hammarskjöld, director-general of the association, pointed out that in an island not far from the Irish coast (“you can guess in which direction”), the national airports authority had to turn in an annual profit of 10-15 per cent a year, while a national airline was operating with marginal profits. Yet they were both components of the same transport system. IATA had calculated that if the airport authority dropped its profit target by one point, the national airline could improve its profit by three points. He did not comment on whether such a move would not also benefit foreign airlines, and drain a lot of foreign currency out of the country.

The conference was notable for the cross-section of airlines—from Aeroflot and United to El Al and Aer Lingus—which were represented. That it was very much an IATA occasion, even in effect an extension of an IATA annual general meeting, was to be expected, but it was none the worse for that.

BUA PILOT DISPUTE

IN what appears to be another attempt to rid BUA of influence by the pilots’ union (BALPA) the airline’s managing director, Mr Alan Bristow, has forced BALPA into a corner against the wishes of all the other unions and employers in the National Joint Council for Civil Aviation. In a dispute over the content of a collective agreement for pilots, which has been under negotiation for 15 months, BUA has refused to accept conciliation or arbitration within the NJC, which has unanimously recommended such action. Thus BALPA may be forced to refer the dispute to the Board of Trade for arbitration at the Industrial Court.

Such action could severely hamper BUA’s growth. This is because the clause of the Civil Aviation Act, 1949, which allows both employers and employees to refer industrial disputes to the BoT, also includes the proviso that employees of independent companies shall have pay comparable with that of corporation employees for comparable work. This would involve BUA in salary increases which BALPA is not claiming—in fact the pilots have offered to defer their pay claims until January next year.

It was under the threat of BUA’s closure that 184 of the airline’s 216 pilots signed individual contracts with the airline in February last year. Such contracts are unique in British aviation, and BUA applies them only to pilots—not to any other group of staff.

The collective agreement which BALPA is trying to negotiate

applies only to the 32 pilots who did not sign individual contracts last year, although both sides agree that when a collective agreement is made all pilots will have the option to change over to it. The crux of the dispute is the same as it was in February 1968: the pilots claim the right, which they were first awarded in 1955 by the Industrial Court, to agree flight schedules with the management. Legally the pilots are in the right: the original award has been reinforced three times with different companies since 1955 and is an integral part of BALPA’s agreement with all the other airlines.

BUA is thought to believe that events have now overtaken the 1955 award and that the BoT flight limitation “guidelines” contained in the Air Navigation Order 1966 give the pilots sufficient protection from the safety and workload aspects.

By refusing to accept suggestions by BALPA that the dispute be settled by the normal NJC conciliation or arbitration methods BUA have brought upon themselves an unprecedented joint approach from the NJC in which the employers as well as the trade unions “suggest that the chairman [of the NJC] . . . puts the proposal reminding that company [BUA] of its obligations.” Apparently BUA feels that arbitration on something which affects only 32 of its pilots is not worth proceeding with. BALPA has said in principle that it will approach the Board of Trade, although it does not want to do so, but that any arbitration from that source could lead the company into much greater financial obligations than are claimed under the draft collective contract. Thus, says BALPA, any financial penalty involved will be the responsibility of the airline.