

whether the assembly of more Concorde should be authorised.

High-level talks are currently taking place to clear the way for supersonic services by Concorde to Australia. Some reports suggest that the Indonesian and Indian Governments have agreed to supersonic corridors and it seems likely that negotiations will be complete in time for proving flights in July and August (see also page 444).

Last week a French-registered Concorde was being subjected to runway-slush trials at Fairford, using ice brought by truck from London. Cold-weather trials may take place in Finland at the end of this month and the way has been cleared for further runway trials in Canada if these are necessary.

Eight pilots and eight engineers from British Airways are now under training at Filton. For the pilots the ground school will last four weeks, including several days spent studying the theory of supersonic flight. Company procedures training will last a week and will take place at a British Airways training centre. Between one and two weeks' simulator instruction will follow at Toulouse before flying training lasting about a week takes place from Fairford. Three Air France flight crews began their course at the Aeroformation Training Centre at Toulouse on February 17. Instruction for maintenance engineers started on March 3.

The British Airways pilots now under instruction are all management staff from the Overseas Division and will become training captains on the Concorde fleet. According to British Airways, the question of special rates of pay for flight crews and cabin staff is not being discussed. *Flight* was told that, apart from arguments about crewing on the DC-10s operated in pool with Air New Zealand, there are currently no negotiations under way or planned in the near future on pay for crews. This raises the prospect of a last-minute dispute after the shadow services flown by management pilots have taken place. Similar disputes held up the introduction of the Comet, 747 and, most recently, the TriStar.

BRITISH AIRWAYS AND THE SPANISH MARKET

THE TOTAL UK-Spain air-travel market last year was approximately six million passengers, making it easily the biggest single source of passenger business for Britain's air transport industry. More than half the total—scheduled and charter—originated from London's airports (Heathrow, Luton, Gatwick and Stansted).

Ninety-five per cent of the traffic is non-business, but the total number of passengers carried on British Airways and Iberia scheduled services this year is expected to be about 780,000, of which British Airways' share—much of it now in Tristars—will be just over 50 per cent, ten per cent more than last year.

British Airtours, British Airways' charter subsidiary, expects to carry nearly 300,000 passengers to Spanish destinations this year, bringing the total British Airways share of the Spanish market to 11 per cent.

The Tristar is now in operation on scheduled services to Madrid, operating five of the 12 weekly services. During the summer season TriStars will serve Palma—operating three of the seven weekly flights—Malaga and Alicante.

Both scheduled and charter bookings are reported to be strong, and Mr John Norton, British Airways' general manager, has hopes for the new "public group fares" in the UK-Spain market. These are excursion fares available to groups of ten people or more travelling together and staying between ten days and a month (two months in the winter). They are available from April 1 to the prime Spanish resorts. The idea is to attract people who do not want conventional holiday packages or even accommodation, but who are renting villas or staying with friends. The public group fares offer more than a 50 per cent discount on the normal return fare: to Alicante, for example it is reduced from the normal excursion of just over £100 to less than £70 in summer and to below £55 in the winter months. The new fares are expected to attract about 22,000 passengers next year.

UTA ON COMPETITION

ANTOINE VEIL, president of UTA, said in Paris last week that cut-throat competition in air transport was "absurd and catastrophic" for both aircraft manufacturers and airlines. He also described the direct competition between the public and private sectors in Britain as "stupid . . . After long years of civil war," the privately owned French second-force airline has "reached a good level of agreement with Air France." According to M Veil, airlines should try to avoid duplication because this leads to fare and rate battles which in turn reduce profits: "Even the big carriers can break their noses if they indulge in that kind of business."

Since M Veil became chairman in 1971 he has pursued a policy of "détente" with Air France and he wants to extend co-operation to Qantas and Air New Zealand when they begin services to Paris this summer.

M Veil holds strong views on co-operation in the production of aircraft; the US and Europe, he says, will have to work together but the object should be "co-operation, not colonisation." If the Americans continue to use their strength to dominate the European market, protective measures are bound to be taken. The French Government has put large amounts of money into Concorde, Airbus and Mercure and if the market continues to be flooded by the Americans "sooner or later they [the French Government] are bound to protect the French industry."

JUMBO AIRLIFT

CYCLONE Tracey hit the Australian city of Darwin early on Christmas Day 1974. The RAAF was called in to fly emergency equipment, medical aid and supplies of all kinds while civil airliners were used to fly out the city's population. In four days the RAAF and the airlines flew 23,500 people to Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. Some of the passenger loads uplifted were world records for the types involved.

On December 28 two Qantas 747s each carried 633 and 634 passengers. The next day another 747 carried 674 persons, a load which included 306 adults, 328 children and 40 babies, and was a world record. On December 27 a Qantas 707 flew south with 327 people: 157 adults, 121 children and 49 infants. TAA carried well over 4,000 people in its 727s and F.27s. Ansett carried similar numbers, and one of its 727s carried 311 passengers in 151 seats. MMA F.28s conducted a smaller airlift to Perth and one of its F.28s carried 128 people.

The high passenger loads were achieved in the main by asking every adult with uninjured arms and legs to nurse a child. Other children were placed two per seat, and in some cases small children were placed under the seats. The baggage allowance per passenger was strictly limited, but in any case many of the passengers brought with them little or nothing.

EL AL LOOKS AT NEW ROUTES

EL AL is looking for more landing rights in the USA, with Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston and Philadelphia as favourites, Mr Mordecai Ben-Ari, the airline's president, said earlier this month. The Israeli Minister of Transport said on the same occasion that a South-East Asian route would be opened next year, to be followed by a South American route in 1978. Mr Ben-Ari points out that Canada-Israel traffic increased by 30 per cent in the past year and attributes this rise to the direct Montreal-Tel Aviv service started three years ago.

El Al expects only a marginal profit for the financial year ending shortly. 1974 calendar year traffic, at 839,778 passengers, was only 2.9 per cent higher than the 1973 figure, but freight haulage is expected to grow at 11 per cent per year until 1980.

● Plans for a second international airport at Beersheba in southern Israel have been approved and opening is planned for 1980. Meanwhile, Tel Aviv Ben-Gurion is to have a lengthened runway and a new terminal at a cost of £1500 million, £35 million.