New low Swissair/SAS Fares to South America

ENGLAND-SWITZERLAND AIR SERVICE ANNIVERSARY

Although regular air services between the U.K. and Switzerland go back to 1923, year-round services have been operating only for the past 25 years. They started at the end of 1935, when Swissair decided to fly the route Switzerland-London for the first time in the winter, using new " large " Douglas DC-2 aircraft. The first four 14-seater DC-2s had arrived in Switzerland in April 1935. Swissair's decision was based on their technical qualities; commercially speaking their success was outstanding, with seat utilisation at times reaching 80 per cent. The opening of year-round services represented a considerable achievement.

In August 1923, when Handley Page Transport Limited inaugurated the route London-Paris-Basle-Zurich, the journey took seven and a half hours, including a two-hour stop in Paris. The Handley Page aircraft had 10 seats and could reach a speed of about 77 m.p.h. The DC-2 was more than twice as fast — cruising speed was about 169 m.p.h. — and it flew London-Basle-Zurich, a distance of some 500 miles, in about three hours. It was also more comfortable; there was even stewardess service for the passengers!

Cutting out the stop in Paris represented a certain commercial risk and a call at Lille was at one time considered. However, passenger traffic between London and Basle/Zurich developed so well that additional points of call were not necessary. In its Annual Report for 1936 Swissair was able to note : " It has been found that the DC-2s used up to now are no longer adequate for passenger traffic between Switzerland and England during the main season, and we had to operate many extra services. We have therefore decided to purchase two new 21-seater Douglas DC-3 aircraft."

Subsequently the Switzerland-England route became the most important one of Swissair's European network. While in 1936 a total of only 6,325 passengers was flown in both directions, the figures rose to 22,295 in 1946, 103,392 in 1955 and to almost 160,000 in 1960. Aircraft regularly used on the route since 1936 were DC-3s, DC-4s, Convair 240s, Convair Metropolitans, DC-6Bs and DC-7Cs. Rolls-Royce powered Caravelle jets have been operating to Switzerland since May 1960.

In 1936 a 15-day excursion return trip London-Basle cost £12.15s; today the lowest night tourist return fare from London to Basle is £20.10s. Allowing for the changes in money values, one can now fly to Switzerland for less than in those days. One also gets there much faster; in 1923 the London correspondent of a large Swiss newspaper commented on the Handley Page Transport inaugural flight: " At the thought that one can be in London in the morning, have lunch in Paris and be at home in the early afternoon, one can feel an extraordinary satisfaction about this fast link and justified pride in this achievement of human hands and the human spirit triumphing over such colossal distances." Today Swissair's Caravelles fly from London to Basle in 80 minutes and to Zurich in 90 minutes.

NEW LOW SWISSAIR/SAS FARES TO SOUTH AMERICA

From 1st March Swissair and Scandinavian Airlines System will offer new economy class fares to South America, cutting present tourist class fares by up to 30 per cent. They will be available on the two companies' DC-7C " Supersuisso " and " Royal Viking & Globetrotter " services.

The new economy class return fares from London are as follows, with present tourist fares in brackets : to Rio de Janeiro £244.7s. (£347.5s.), to Sao Paulo £250.15s. (£353.13s.), and to Montevideo and Buenos Aires £276.10s. (£366.10s.).

Swissair and SAS will also offer reduced first class fares up to five per cent below present levels. The new fares are being introduced following the recent decision of the International Air Transport Association to cut fares on the routes to and from South America. They are subject to government approval.

FOUR MORE CARAVELLES FOR SWISSAIR

Swissair will take over four new Caravelle jet liners from Scandinavian Airlines System during 1962. This follows the decision by Swissair's Board last December to increase the number of the company's Caravelles from four to eight.

The new aircraft will be used mainly on Swissair's European network and will replace the DC-6Bs. The number of the company's different aircraft types can thus be reduced and its shorthaul operations will become still more economical.

Swissair operates at present four Caravelles in Europe and to the Middle East, leased from SAS under the co-operation agreement between the two airlines.