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BY "CONVAIR" TO SWITZERLAND

Who, amongst my readers, does not remember that popular song: "He flew through the air with the greatest of ease", which proved such a hit in pre-war days, and 'though this ditty really refers to a trapeze acrobat, it vividly recalls the sensation of "ease" one experiences when travelling on a modern Air Liner.

Whilst I have gone on numerous occasions to Switzerland by the Swissair's Douglas DC-3's and DC-4's, it was only quite recently, that I boarded a "Convair" liner bound for Geneva.

It was in 1949, when Swissair first acquired four "CONVAIR" machines, which went into service on the European network in the same year.

This two engine machine can easily be called the world's most advanced medium-range Airliner, and here are a few condensed specifications and performance data:

Gross Weight: 40,500 lbs; Maximum Payload: 9,300 lbs; Passenger capacity: 40; Length: 74' 8"; Wingspan: 91' 8"; Height: 26' 11"; Maximum speed: 326 m.p.h.; Cruising speed: 291 m.p.h.; Engines: Pratt & Whitney R-2,800 CA-18. . . 2,400 h.p. each; Fuel Capacity: 1,000 gals.

Amongst the many advantages built into the "Convair" liner are, pressurization, air conditioning, sound proofing, draft free ventilation, radiant wall heating; all these improvements have made travelling by air a most comfortable and easy affair. Well do I remember the days in the early thirties, when cotton

wool pads were supplied to passengers to deaden the noise of the engines, and conversation with one's fellow passenger was almost impossible.

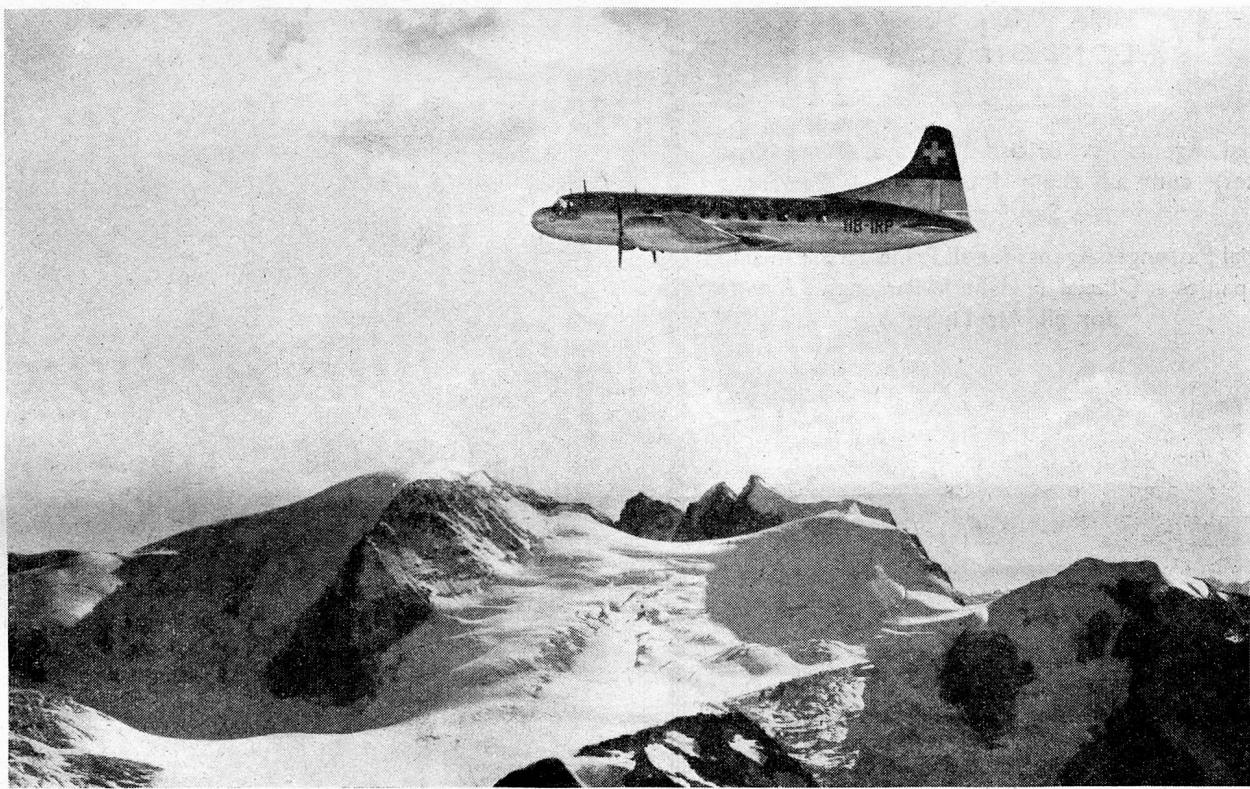
Thanks to the sound proofing of the cabin it is now possible to converse without the slightest difficulty; great improvements have also been made with regard to seating accommodation. The "Convair"-designed seats are exceptionally comfortable. With more than ample leg room and the finger-tip back control, even six footers can stretch out and relax.

Large "Panorama" windows 16-18 inches result in a brighter cabin, and permit even aisle passengers to enjoy the scenery. Vision is further improved by the low placement of the slim, streamlined nacelles on the wings.

The planning of the cabin interior provides ample space for a buffet installation that is convenient, compact and functional. A typical installation is built of stainless light alloys, designed for faster serving of better meals aloft, and easier food stocking, maintenance and cleaning. Space is available for ample storage of hot and cold liquids and prepared foods or frozen and packaged unit meals, and the necessary equipment for preparation and service.

Luggage racks and wardrobe, accessible during flight, are conveniently placed for passengers to stow their own luggage as they pass through the entrance compartment.

Excellent general cabin lighting is provided by



"CONVAIR" IN FLIGHT.

specially designed ceiling fixtures. Individual stewardess call lights are over each pair of seats.

The lavatory has warm running water. There is ample space for fresh and used linens, soap, etc. Large mirrors, outlets for electric razors, good lighting, and adequate shelf space are provided.

Can one wish for more comfort in travelling?

* * *

Northolt. It was 10.40 a.m. when we taxied along the take off strip, properly strapped in for the ascent; then a mighty roar of the twin engines, a hardly noticeable jolt, and looking out of the window the hangars opposite quickly disappeared, and in an incredibly short time the machine had left *terra firma* gaining height rapidly.

After a little while, the two smartly attired stewardesses or air hostesses, as they are called, asked the passengers to undo their belts, distributing the latest Swiss newspapers, magazines, route maps, etc.

Whoever is responsible for engaging these young ladies deserves a compliment, not only are they "good to look at", but they are most attentive and obliging, in fact I was told by one of the Managers, that the company encounters great difficulties in retaining their services, owing to their changing their job with alarming frequency to enter into holy matrimony, and I would advise all those daughters of Eve, who are anxious to quit their status of spinsterhood to become air hostesses, a sure way to achieve their ambition.—

Half way to the coast we ran into big clouds which we scaled with great facility, beneath us was now a vast unending sea of mist on which a radiant sun shone. Some of the gigantic cloud formations reminded one of huge glaciers scarred by deep crevasses through which, now and again, green fields, villages and rivers could be discerned.

Travelling in this vast expanse of rolling white clouds one has the feeling as if transplanted into arctic regions, and is overcome with a sensation of great joy and ecstasy at having left mother earth behind with all its strife and turmoil. Down below the toils and worries, up here, thousands of feet above the ground, there is peace and an almost uncanny calmness.

Within a quarter of an hour from starting, we reached the coast near Hastings, beneath us was the channel looking rather sombre in colour, here and there a white ripple testified that the sea was rough, and I for one was thankful at not having been obliged to make the crossing in one of the boats, which could be seen from a height of about 5,000 feet looking like little toys.

On crossing the French coast in the neighbourhood of Cayeux, we greeted La belle France, in spite of the great height and a speed of 420 km.p.h. we could clearly see large forests, roads and rivers which looked like thin

silver bands, villages and towns appeared and disappeared at a bewildering pace. Still we were climbing to greater heights reaching 15,500 feet.

By kind permission of the captain, I was given an opportunity to pay a short visit to the pilot's cabin, accommodating a crew of three (Captain, co-pilot and wireless operator). All controls, throttles and switches are designed and located for maximum convenience and positive operation by both pilots.

Returning to the passenger cabin, I noticed that the electric sign to put on the belts was displayed, ice flowers appeared on the windows and dark and threatening clouds could be seen in front of us. One or two bumps proved that we were encountering heavy weather, but soon the sun appeared again, belts were discarded and luncheon was served by the stewardesses, consisting of soup, cold meat, cheese, fresh fruit and coffee or tea, all free of charge. The quality of the meal and service was worthy of the best traditions of the foremost Swiss Hotel.

A bulletin, issued by the captain and passed on to the passengers, denoted that we were passing over Dijon at a height of 16,000 feet, and at a speed of 430 km.p.h. and that we were expected to reach the airport of Cointrin at 12.45 local time.

The machine now began to descend, in the distance some of the mountains of Haute Savoie could be seen, small picturesque lakes of azure blue colour passed by, and looking out of the window I could see somewhere a Swiss flag flying. We were now rapidly approaching our Journey's End. In a few minutes, we passed over the imposing buildings of the Palais des Nations, then Lac Léman came into sight with its sailing yachts and pleasure steamers over which we circled in a wide bend to make a perfect landing at the airport at the exact time indicated on the captain's bulletin.

The flight from Northolt to Geneva thus having taken exactly 1 hour and fifty minutes, or 20 minutes



INTERIOR OF "CONVAIR"

less than scheduled time, owing to favourable weather conditions.

This first flight by "Convair" liner was an experience I would not have liked to miss for anything, maximum safety, perfect comfort and courteous service makes travelling by Swissair a delightful event.

ST.

ASSEMBLY OF PRESIDENTS OF THE SWISS SOCIETIES.

The tenth Meeting of the Assembly was held in the evening of Thursday, March 15th under the Chairmanship of Mr. R. Dupraz (City Swiss Club). The Minister was represented by Dr. E. M. Bircher, Secretary of Legation, who reported that the Fund for Avalanche Victims in Switzerland, launched under the auspices of the Presidents' Assembly, had so far reached £3,041. The Hon. Secretary, Mr. W. Meier (Swiss Mercantile Society), read several letters received from Swiss Societies in the Provinces reporting on the measures they had taken to help the Fund.

The main concern of the meeting was the Official Draft for a New Federal Law regarding the granting and the loss of Swiss Citizenship. It was evident throughout the discussion that the meeting wished to see more favourable treatment than that provided for in the Draft Law, both as regards the retention of Swiss citizenship and the re-acquisition of it by former Swiss nationals under certain circumstances. With this aim in view the meeting decided upon the following recommendations:

- (a) that a Swiss lady should not automatically lose her Swiss citizenship on marrying a foreigner whose nationality she acquired through marriage;
- (b) that the granting of Swiss citizenship should be made easier in the case of ladies who had previously lost it through marriage to a foreigner, and in particular, that where there are strong humane reasons the period of one year's residence in Switzerland prior to the application being made, could be shortened or waived entirely by the competent authorities;
- (c) that any decisions by the authorities (except in cases of granting Swiss citizenship to foreigners) could be submitted in the appellant's choice either to the Federal Council (as provided for in the Draft Law) or the Federal Court of Justice;
- (d) that the facility of registering as a Swiss citizen with a Swiss Consulate or other Swiss Authority in the second generation born abroad should be granted beyond the age of 20, possibly up to the age of 25.

These recommendations will be communicated to the "Auslandschweizerwerk der N.H.G." in Berne.

Mr. A. Renou (Confrérie Vaudoise), who had just returned from Switzerland, reported on the progress of English children suffering from asthma and sent to Malix for treatment under a scheme launched by the Swiss Economic Council. Several of the children had recently returned to England completely cured.

The next meeting of the Assembly was fixed for Friday, June 1st, when the main subject for discussion will be the programme of the "Journée des Suisses de l'Etranger" to be held at the end of August in Basle.

W.M.

"SCHWEIZERBUND" (SWISS CLUB). (74, Charlotte Street, W.1.)

At the recently held General Meeting of the "Schweizerbund" (Swiss Club), it was decided to make a reduction in the subscription fees for *Country Members*, so as to enable them to meet their friends on occasional visits to London and to make use of the comfortable Club premises.

The reduced fee will be £1.1.0 for Gentlemen and 10/6 for Ladies.

For London membership the fee remains as hitherto, namely £2.2.0 for Gentlemen and £1.1.0 for Ladies.

The Committee hopes, that many of our compatriots, who are living outside London, will make use of this favourable offer.

SCHWEIZERBUND (SWISS CLUB).

We wish to direct the attention of our readers to a dance, which will take place on Friday, April 20th, 1951, at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1, in aid of the Avalanche Fund. Both the Swiss Male Choir and the Swiss Accordion Club will appear on that evening and it is hoped that many of our readers will be present to support this good cause. (Tickets 5/-.)



SWISSAIR

NIGHT

SERVICE

*For further information
consult your Travel Agent or 'phone*

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