

INDIAN SKYWAYS

The Aviation Journal of India

Proprietors & Publishers

Aeronautical Publications of India Limited

REGISTERED & EDITORIAL OFFICES
No. 2, GANDHIGRAM ROAD,
Juhu, BOMBAY. 23.

Ref: 118/124

January 7th, 1955

Copy B.
Peter King, Esq.,
The Bristol Aeroplane Company Limited,
England.

My dear Peter,

I am very pleased to receive your letter dated January 3rd concerning the DC-7C. It comes at a time when my mind is very fully occupied with the interests of British Aviation Industry and I intentionally use the word 'Aviation' because it includes both manufacturers and operators.

The position of the Britannia must be regarded with concern as according to published statements by BOAC the first deliveries were due in May 1954. We are now in the 8th month beyond these deliveries and, it is regrettable that the aircraft has still to undergo pressurization tests in the water tank at Farnborough and BOAC require considerably more flying tests as they do not consider a grand total of 600 hours by all built Britannia as anything like sufficient testing, specially as most of these have been flown unpressurized. Also, I am given to understand that one Britannia has flown 120 hours test flying, and this is the maximum flown by any single aircraft.

pressurized
The story of the proposed types of engines which should be fitted ^{to} emanated with the BE-25 which is now under consideration does not tend to give those outside very much confidence. The changes in power plant have doubtless been proposed with all good intentions to improve performance which of course is acceptable to any operator but this process must obviously delay the eventual delivery of the aircraft and, it constantly changes the operator's operating programme.

I gather that BOAC has already paid the Bristol Company an enormous sum of £6,640,000 as progressive payments and they are still many months from likelihood of receiving their first aircraft which should have gone into operation during 1954.

Let us be realistic and ask ourselves if we can with absolute truth say that the BE-25 engine is going to pass through its preliminary trials so quickly, that it will be ready for airline operation in 1957, in a condition that will give it at least 750 hours between overhauls. Also, it must be operationally reliable. The difficulties with the Super Constellation due to compound engine troubles are better left undescribed, as

Peter King Esq.

January 7th, 1955

they bring untold losses to the operator. Any new engine is liable to inflict these miseries on the buyer and unless a manufacturer is prepared to take his engines through prolonged tests until all the snags have been removed he is virtually asking the airline operator to act as a sort of test bed.

I believe I am correct when I say that the Princess flying boats are more or less permanently grounded or should I say watered because the engines which were to be produced for them never materialised. Also, I gather that these engines were the responsibility of Bristols, so very naturally it does not surprise me when I receive reliable reports from several sources indicating that the general opinion is, the Britannia may suffer a similar fate to that which the Princesses have succumbed.

It is extremely distressing to me that the position in British aviation has become alarming, as is clearly indicated in the questions in the House of Parliament regarding fighter aircraft deliveries. I have several sources of information of a reliable nature, and I think INDIAN SKYWAYS is very adequately informed. Personally I have more than 40 years aviation experience and, I am quite unable to regard the present position as satisfactory and I fear it is leading to something approaching a crisis.

Production rate is deplorable, the Viscount with all their orders still trickle at a claimed production of 5 per month, which means that present orders will take the manufacturer something like three years to complete, by which time this model will be obsolete. There are blacker stories that could be related but, there is no point in reciting one misery after another.

I must however mention the New Zealand order for 100 agricultural aircraft secured by the Fletcher American Company, who actually designed the aircraft to meet the New Zealand requirements. If an American manufacturer of limited size can go out of his way to co-operate with the buyer why can not some British manufacturer have done the same? Surely New Zealand would have preferred to buy within the Commonwealth, and yet this order goes to America for no less than 100 aircraft.

I can not help remembering that when I kicked at the SBAC with my editorial "Battle to Buy British", you and your companions both in the SBAC and the factories, threw every available brick you could lay your hands on at my head. How very unfair all that was, when in point of fact I was indicating nothing but the truth pointing towards the disastrous situation which is now fast approaching the great body of the British Aircraft Industry.

yours sincerely,

R. Vaughan-Fowler
R. Vaughan-Fowler
Editor.

cc: Maurice Elliott, Esqre.,
Greaves Cotton, Bombay.