

AVIATION: SUMMER RUSH

Flights to More Places and Tourist-Class Planes to Europe Help the Airlines

By FREDERICK GRAHAM

THE summer rush of air tourists has already started, and the airlines hope and expect that this season will be the heaviest in the history of commercial air transport. The lines say the rush started earlier than usual, and was complicated by the strike in the petroleum industry and the resultant government-ordered gasoline restrictions that forced cancellation of many flights. However, these restrictions were lifted last week.

Both hopes and estimates for a record-breaking tourist season are based on the increasingly widespread acceptance of flight. In addition to the more general acceptance of airline travel, the lines point out they now have more planes, more flights and more places to fly to than ever before.

No sizable town or city in the United States is far from an airport with regular commercial airline service. Alaska and Canada are only a hop, skip and jump away. The islands of the Caribbean are now serviced by several airlines and the service seems to increase each year.

South America and Central America, long favorite places for tourists with lots of time and money, have of recent years had a growing number of air tourists. This year air travel to those places is expected to be the heaviest ever.

Domestic Flights

It is within the continental limits of the United States, however, that most vacationists will be flying the airlines. Most spots that can be reached only after long journeys by surface transport have been opened up since the end of the war by the airplane.

Dude ranches far from surface transport, lakes and rivers that used to be accessible only after long trips on the ground, and new resorts for the summer tourist can now be reached in a fraction of the time by combining air and surface travel. Many of these special tourist places have sprung up since the war.

The tourist-fare service of several of the domestic airlines will have great appeal this year, airline and travel officials believe. Such service this year is more than double that available last summer.

Tourist service, as many people have learned by this time, is exactly like regular airline service

with the exception that meals are not served aloft and more people are carried on each plane. The plane itself and the flight crew are exactly the same as on the regular runs and operating procedures are identical. The big difference is the fare reduction of about 30 per cent.

Package tours which include hotel reservations, ground transportation at the holiday point and sight-seeing trips on the side will be more prominent this year than ever before. In some instances, package tours will be sold to places that used to be thought of primarily as winter resorts.

Tourist Service

But, by all odds, the beginning of tourist-class air service across the Atlantic between the United States and Europe is the biggest travel difference of the coming season. It has been a long time coming but it is here now and the airlines are more than a little surprised by the response of the air traveling public.

The tourist-class flights of nine foreign-flag and two American-flag lines on the North Atlantic were sold out for the first month of service the day they began. The airlines, particularly those which had felt air travel was a first-class affair and which on those grounds had held off on tourist service, were amazed.

Before the end of the first month of tourist-class service, regular commercial airline flights between Europe and the United States were curtailed because of the strike of oil refinery workers. It was significant that most lines continued as many tourist flights as possible and cut their regular or de luxe flights as the oil restrictions tightened.

Atlantic Bookings

There is little doubt that tourist-class service on the North Atlantic run will prove itself this summer. The airlines and the travel agencies have had little or no trouble in filling the planes in the new service.

One early sign, particularly pleasing to the airlines, was the large number of bookings for westbound flights. It had been assumed that while eastbound flights would be well booked, the hops in the opposite direction might be light. In the first few weeks of the service westbound bookings have been much better than expected.