



Transmeridian Air Cargo Limited's Canadair-built, CL44 Skymonster, a swing-tail aircraft, is unloaded on her first trip to Freeport International Airport. (Photo by Jualmo)

Transmeridian Links Bahamas and the Americas To World Markets

Transmeridian Air Cargo Limited inaugurated a weekly flight to Freeport International Airport on August 27, 1971.

The new service provides air cargo distribution through Freeport from the United Kingdom, Europe, the Middle East, the Orient and Africa to the Bahamas, the United States, the Caribbean and Central and South America, using connecting sea and air cargo operations.

The first flight brought 25 tons of textiles through Lisbon, Portugal, from Hong Kong, destined for the retail stores in New York City.

Transmeridian's service reduces costs, for Bahamas firms importing from the U.K., Europe and the Orient, up to 50 per cent below the normal air cargo rates. In many instances, shipping charges from the United Kingdom are now competitive with surface transport. Minimum shipments of 1,000 kilos (2,200 pounds) are required.

In addition to the financial advantages, Transmeridian provides speedier delivery service, which enables businesses in Freeport and Nassau, as well as elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere, to reduce warehouse stocks and capital investment in inventory.

The new route, named the "Bahamas Seabird" service, operates from Transmeridian's headquarters at Stansted Airport, Stansted, Essex, England. Stansted Airport, just 35 miles from London, is convenient to the industrial Midlands of England. The present schedule, of one flight a week, non-stop from Stansted to Freeport, is expected to increase to three flights a week as demand warrants it.

Agents for the new cargo service are Freeport Transfer Limited on Grand Bahama and Package Delivery Service in Nassau. From Freeport, Transmeridian flights connect with air cargo service by Skyfreight International Airlines Inc., to Nassau and other destinations. When the major portion of cargo is destined for Nassau, the flight will be routed to New Providence Island.

Cargo destined for the United States, the Caribbean and Central and South America is loaded onto trailers in Freeport for shipment to Florida and some Caribbean island ports as roll-on/roll-off cargo. From these ports, it proceeds to its destination by air, sea, rail or road.

Transmeridian has established offices in Airlift International's building at Miami International Airport. Airlift International and Transmeridian have a close working relationship, with Airlift International handling freight for the United States and Central and South America. The British company has also established offices in several U.S. cities.

Transmeridian operates a fleet of five Canadair-built, CL44, swing-tail freighters which are powered by four Rolls-Royce jet-prop engines. Each aircraft carries a 65,000-pound payload and cruises at 350 miles per hour. When loaded and fuelled, the plane weighs over 100 tons.

The Canadair CL44s were specially designed for transportation of freight. The unique swing-tail arrangement enables the most bulky and awkward loads to be

carried, as the full body of the plane is open to receive cargo.

The "Skymonster," a skyfreighter modified to double the size of the standard CL44, enables Transmeridian to carry freight hitherto impossible to ship by air cargo without dismantling. The addition of this plane to Transmeridian's fleet, easily facilitates transporting cargo as large as motor vehicles, helicopters or air-planes.

Each plane operates with a crew of five — two pilots, a navigator, a flight engineer and a loadmaster.

The fully pressurized aircraft fly at altitudes of up to 30,000 feet, thus reducing damage to cargo which can be caused by turbulent weather conditions at lower altitudes.

Because the cargo is handled more carefully, less extensive crating is necessary than would be needed for sea cargo, thus reducing the costs of shipping. For sea freight across the Atlantic, many pounds are added in crating to protect cargo in heavy weather. The cost of this crating has the effect of increasing customs duties in the Bahamas, as duties are levied on the cost of crating and handling. This adds an extra cost to the total bill paid by the consignee.

The open, swing-tail of Transmeridian Air Cargo Company's new Canadair-built CL44 Skymonster demonstrates her ability to transport cargo as large as automobiles, on the fuselage of a smaller plane. To the right of the "Bahamas Seabird," as it has been dubbed, are Cyril Bernard, Tom Siddley, Freeport Transfer; Bob Rimmer, Freeport Transfer; John Kimball, president, The Grand Bahama Port Authority; and Mike Keegan, chairman of Transmeridian.

(Photo by Jualmo)

