

# British and French Voice Relief Over SST's Trial

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By CLYDE H. FARNSWORTH

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PARIS, Feb. 4—The decision by Transportation Secretary William T. Coleman Jr. to give the Concorde limited access to New York and Washington was more favorable than expected and should permit the supersonic carrier to prove itself as a "good neighbor," officials of Britain and France agreed tonight.

The two countries, which have spent \$3 billion on the supersonic carrier in more than 10 years of development, had feared that anti-Concorde pressure would keep the plane out of the United States and, by foreclosing the lucrative North Atlantic route, doom their ambitious cooperative project.

It had served notice that Concorde landing rights were considered essential to the maintenance of good commercial relations between the United States and Europe.

"It is an excellent decision," said Jean-charles Poggi, commercial director for Aerospatiale, the state-owned aircraft company that built the plane along with the British Aircraft Corporation.

"A wise and sensible decision," said Henry Marking, deputy chairman and managing director of British Airways. "Lucky Washington," he added. "Lucky New York."

British Airways and Air France together will have nine Concorde. Their officials said tonight that they expected to start service to the United States in late Spring or early Summer.

## Proposed Schedule

The British announced a proposed schedule. A Concorde would leave London at 11:15 A.M. local time and arrive in New York at 10:15 A.M. On the eastbound flight, it would leave New York at 12:15 P.M. and arrive in London at 9:00 P.M. local time.

The supersonic flights would take about three and a half hours each way, compared with subsonic flights of about six and a half hours from New York to London and seven and a half hours coming back. Supersonic flights are unaffected by headwinds because they are at higher altitudes, unlike subsonic flights.

British Airways said it expected to charge a round-trip fare of L584 (about \$1,168) between London and New York and L620 (\$1,240) between London and Washington. This is roughly 17.7 per cent above normal first-class fares.

Although they recognized the possibility of court battles with

environmentalists or a vote to block the Concorde in the House of Representatives, the officials said they believed they had gotten a fair deal from Mr. Coleman.

Expectations in both London and Paris before the Washington announcement were that the Transportation Secretary would approve the Concorde for Washington only and limit the trial period to six months.

But the reactions were not euphoric. The French Transport Minister, Marcel Cavaille, told reporters that a "definitive yes would have seemed to me fairer and more just."

## Commercial Service

He said that under existing international agreements any airliner that received a certificate of airworthiness and violated no environmental regulations "should be universally accepted whatever country builds it."

The French minister further more cited the difficulties of opening a route of such importance without having assurances about its duration.

Peter Shore, the British Secretary for Trade, told a London news conference that the British would take any hurdles "one by one."

But he added that if British Airways had any difficulties with the Port Authority of New York, and New Jersey, which has the final say about opening up Kennedy Airport, the British Government "might be brought in."

On the practical details of developing commercial service to the United States, both countries are opening up immediate discussions with American officials.

## Support for Project

Public support for the Concorde has been stronger in France than in Britain, whose Labor Government more than a decade ago even considered scrapping the effort as too costly.

An articulate anti-Concorde lobby has grown up in Britain, and its spokesman, Richard Wigg, who has backing in the British scientific community, commented tonight that Mr. Coleman was acting "for political and diplomatic reasons."

Mr. Wigg, secretary of a movement known as the Anti-Concorde Project, predicted that the decision would start "a big and unpleasant fight" in New York, "including the boycott of British and French airlines."