

AMERICAN AIRLINES, INC.
New York, N. Y.

April 15, 1954

To: The Directors

There was a story in a national magazine last week, evidently prompted by one of our competitors, saying, in effect, that American Airlines was scheduling its DC 7 airplanes at a speed in excess of the capacity of the airplane, with consequent delays.

On the eastbound flight the schedule is 7:15, ramp to ramp. From the time of beginning the DC 7 service, November, 1953, to March 22, 1954, the average ramp to ramp time has been 7:11, four minutes faster than schedule.

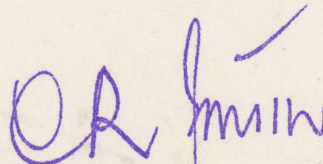
On the westbound flight the schedule time is 7:55. The average time made during the period was 8:48, 53 minutes late.

On an annual basis these flights can be made on schedule: 7:15 and 7:55; that is the conclusion of our studies and experience. The DC 7 airplane is making its guaranteed cruising speed. Better "on time" performance will be aided by more experience in plotting "best time" tracks, by the installation of automatic pilots and by some relatively minor jobs of "cleaning up" the airplane aerodynamically, such as reducing the drag of radio antennae. All of this is under way.

It is usual for the winter winds to be strongly eastbound. During the winter season of 1953-54 they have been unusually strong. Headwinds of 100 mph have not been uncommon and I know of one eastbound wind of 360 mph which was reported by an F86, at 40,000 feet. During the usual winter season we anticipate eastbound winds in the eastern section of the United States running to 60 mph. During the summer the eastbound winds for all of the United States usually average 10-20 mph.

We should expect, quite soon, a substantial improvement in the westbound running times, with some slowing up in the eastbound flights, with better conformance to scheduled times in both directions.

We have had the experience of a winter operation with the DC 7; we shall soon have the experience of the summer operation. When that is available we will be in position to decide whether we shall schedule the DC 7's on an annual basis, or make seasonal changes in schedules to reflect estimates of seasonal wind components.


C. R. Smith