

editorial

50th Anniversary of Flight Opportunity for Appraisal

In a few weeks we pass the 50-year mark in the history of powered flight in Canada. In this issue, Canadian Aviation presents a capsule review of some of the exploits which have been the milestones to this Golden Anniversary marker.

It is particularly appropriate, one might almost describe the coincidence as predestinated, that observance of half a century of aviation progress should come at such a time of trial for the Canadian industry. There are some who fear that, in the light of decisions which lie ahead, the most fitting monument to the Golden Anniversary of Powered Flight in Canada might well be a headstone.

The briefest glance backward should be enough to dispel the haze generated by this cynical appraisal. As always, the past is the key to the future.

Achievements of the builders of Canadian aircraft and the men who fly them have been mighty and many, although they have not had particularly wide recognition either by the international aviation community or by the people of Canada who have been the main beneficiaries. Company records and log books show that they have not been accomplished with any great ease. Initiative and determination have been and remain the order of the day.

There have been half-starts which in the mellow glow of hindsight appear certain to have led down avenues which would have brought Canada world leadership and the lucrative markets which go with it in more than one facet of the many-sided complex which is the aviation industry of 50 years later.

There is much to be learned from a look at the past. The most obvious fact is that aviation is a vital part of and will continue to assume growing importance to

our national economy, in both productivity and service and also in providing a protective force against threats not only to our economy but to our very nation.

Not so widely recognized, as we have said, is the fact that a Canadian industry can alone serve Canada's peculiar aviation requirements with any degree of adequacy.

The 50th anniversary of flight is an opportune time to drive these lessons home with the people of Canada who, in the final analysis, will decide whether Canada is to maintain an independent and vital aviation industry. The prime investment in aviation products to serve our needs will be made with their money.

Our Golden Anniversary monument, then, should be a beacon illuminating achievements of the past and providing confidence in the role the Canadian aviation industry can play in the nation's future.

Incidentally, we'd draw your attention to a letter from G. W. Mitchison of Saskatoon in our Readers' Reaction column, on historical material and its preservation.

We would heartily second his suggestion. One of the projects to mark 50 years of flight is establishment of an official national aviation museum. This would no doubt be the appropriate storehouse for much of the material Mr. Mitchison has in mind. Some items, with particularly local significance, would be more suitably kept in their immediate areas of interest.

Canadian Aviation will publish details on the national museum as soon as plans are made final. Meanwhile, we'd be happy to hear from anyone who has material of historic interest with a view to putting them in touch with the authorities.