

Editorial

REGRETTABLE DECISION

The RCAF recently turned down a request of the Soaring Association of Canada to provide transportation for the Canadian gliding team in connection with the World Gliding Championships. It impresses us that this was a particularly unfortunate decision on the part of the Air Force, more so in view of the fact that no reason was given for rejecting the application. There are undoubtedly many more requests made for trans-Atlantic transportation than the RCAF can possibly handle with its limited number of flights available on this run, yet it seems to us that the SAC's application was worthy of top priority. The sport of gliding does not receive the support in Canada that it properly deserves. It teaches and maintains skills that are of particular value to the military and would undoubtedly soon be called into play in the event of war. Recognition of this basic fact seems to be common enough in dictatorships, but the democratic nations have always ignored the latent possibilities of the sport. Hitler's air force was built on a government-sponsored gliding program, and look what it was able to do. Surely this recent lesson has not so soon been forgotten.

THE INDISPENSABLE ENGINEER

In an article entitled "Engineers and Aircraft Production," to be found elsewhere in this issue of *Aircraft*, Group Captain H. R. Footitt emphasizes that it is not possible to maintain an aircraft production program anywhere—even when existing designs are produced under license, without the backing of a strong engineering team.

Says G/C Footitt: "Engineers, bound as they are to Canadian aircraft productive capacity, are thus as vital to this country as the bricks, mortar, and machine tools of the contractor's plant. Yet we in Canada just do not turn out enough young engineers to meet the demand." He then goes on to point out that in spite of this unsatisfied demand, only two aeronautical engineers were graduated this year in all of Canada.

Only Two: It seems strange that among all the young men who graduated in engineering this year, only two should find the aviation field sufficiently attractive to specialize in it. Of course, there will be many other graduates in other branches of the engineering profession who will be employed by the aircraft industry, yet even this does not alter the fact that only two young men have been added to the aeronautical engineering ranks.

It is true that modern aviation embraces in varying degrees many other branches of engineering besides aeronautical; it is equally true that as the general practitioner is the basic element in the medical field, so the aeronautical engineer is the basic element in the aviation industry. There is little doubt that even though the industry's demand for additional engineers is comparatively small at present, it nevertheless has the capacity to absorb more than two aeronautical specialists per annum.

It does not seem likely that the earning potential of the aeronautical engineer is the problem, in spite of the fact that a recent survey by the Canadian Federation of Engineers & Scientists revealed that as a general rule, the earnings of engineers and physicists employed below the management level, was considerably less than had been supposed. Though the survey did not indicate just how aeronautical engineers fared in comparison to other groups, there is nothing to indicate that they made a poor showing.

Thus, while the survey might, cynics could say, have shown why a person should not enter the engineering profession, it does nothing to reveal why a student, having made up his mind to ignore the disadvantage of comparatively low remuneration of the profession as a whole, should shy away from one particular branch.

Ups and Downs: It seems more likely that the industry's lack of appeal to engineers can be traced to its boom-or-bust reputation. While this may have been good cause not so many years ago, it now appears that the industry has attained a comparative degree of stability. However, reputations die hard, and the problem is how to convince potential engineers that there is a future for them in the Aviation Industry.

Undoubtedly, this is only one reason for the current situation. A comprehensive study is required to ascertain how best to encourage student engineers to turn their eyes to the aeronautical field. Perhaps this is a job that the Canadian Aeronautical Institute could shoulder its own advantage as well as that of the whole Industry.