



## editorial

### The man who flew the Silver Dart

We have just finished reading *The Silver Dart*, by H. Gordon Green, a biography of the Hon. J. A. D. McCurdy, Canada's first pilot. It is published by the Brunswick Press Ltd., Fredericton, N.B., under the authority of the National Coordinating Council of the Golden Anniversary of Flight in Canada. We extend to Mr. Green our congratulations for a most significant and timely contribution to the recorded history of aviation in this country.

#### An impressive list of "firsts"

The pioneers who taught themselves to fly in contraptions of their own contriving were a wonderful breed, and Douglas McCurdy was among the greatest of them. Mr. Green says of him, "He had not only been the first Britisher to make a controlled flight, but he was the ninth man in the world to fly a heavier-than-air machine; he had contributed largely to the invention of the aileron, the tricycle landing gear, wing dope and pontoons; he had been the first man to fly a plane powered by a water-cooled motor; had made the first great ocean flight (Florida to Cuba); had made the first flight with skis; had been the first to demonstrate the possibility of bombing from the air; he had given flight control a dramatic new meaning by flying the first figure eight; he had been the first pilot to send and receive a wireless message while aloft."

During World War I and in later years he was an aircraft industrialist. During World War II he was Supervisor of Purchasing and Assistant Director-General of Aircraft Production. In 1948 he was made Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia.

#### A creative dreamer

Through it all, it is apparent that the engineer McCurdy, who was able to visualize a man-carrying flying machine, and go methodically about designing, building and flying it — that the pilot McCurdy who, having flown in primitive aircraft, was able to visualize their future and work constructively towards it — that the man McCurdy to whom the years have brought honors and rewards — remains a creative dreamer.

Mr. Green has brought this out very nicely by including in the appendices to *The Silver Dart* the full text of a speech made by the Hon. J. A. D. McCurdy in 1949. He said, in part, "Let us suppose that a commonwealth be set up embracing the United States, the British Isles, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa . . . Further, suppose that we . . . start this organization of free or English-speaking people, as a step constituted to secure eventually and in an ever growing degree the freedom, peace and prosperity of every man and woman. The union authority shall have somewhat the same limited but effective powers . . . notably to make war and peace for all of its members, to govern their foreign relations . . . to provide them with a common defense force, a common free trade market, a common currency, a common postal and communication system and a common citizenship; each country, however, preserving the present status of its institutions insofar as deemed practicable."

#### Obviously we need leadership — where shall we find it?

As we write, it is the Golden Anniversary week end. Mr. Diefenbaker, with exquisite finesse, has chosen this moment to cancel the *Arrow* program, with all of its implications for the future of this country, and its people. Perhaps now we should look again to Douglas McCurdy for leadership — this time towards the realization of another of his dreams.

Arnold Warren.