

EDITORIAL

Slander of the Safety Belt

THE Dept. of Transport has issued a circular ruling that passenger safety belts will no longer be mandatory "in the case of passenger seats in aircraft used for the carriage of passengers and freight in non-scheduled bush operations." This is a logical concession to the practical requirements of bush flying where in many instances a passenger surrounded by sleeping bags, tents and well-stowed cargo has better impact-protection than a safety belt could provide.

However, it is unfortunate that this announcement was accompanied, in at least one case, by the suggestion in the press that maybe seat belts are not so important anyway. After quoting an anonymous D.O.T. spokesman explaining that installation of seats took up valuable space in a bush plane, the Ottawa Journal reports.

"Another official said he didn't believe a safety belt was of much use."

It is hard to imagine a Dept. of Transport official uttering such a remark. The accident records of the Department as well as the experience in other countries offer eloquent and tragic testimony to the wisdom of using safety belts. Time and again it has been established that serious injury or death in a crack-up could have been avoided by the simple expedient of fastening a safety belt. Surely, "another official" must have been misquoted.

Congratulations Avro Canada

IT IS quite apparent that the flight of the Canadian Jetliner and the English Comet have startled quite a few air industry and air transport leaders in the United States. An appraisal of the situation from the American viewpoint was expressed by the engineering editor of Aviation Week who wrote that the Comet flight "opened a new era in commercial air transportation and put the United States and the rest of the world at least three years behind technologically in this field." The American correspondent of Flight magazine, refers to the flight of the Ghost-engined Comet as "the ghost-writing in the sky" as seen by the U. S. industry.

Britain entered the peace lagging hopelessly behind the American competition in the design and production of postwar civil airliners. The policy adopted then, of conceding a defeat, even to the extent of purchasing American airliners for the British-flag services, and setting the sights for the jet era of the "flying fifties" has proved to be wise.

Canada is most fortunate to be up in front with the first pure-jet domestic airliner in the world. It will be three or four years before the airline customer will be able to step up to the wicket for his Jetliner ticket. But there is no doubt that the success of this Avro Canada project calls for rousing cheers.

Though less spectacular, the development of the

Canadian-designed Orenda jet engine is of at least comparable significance. The keen young Canadians responsible for this accomplishment deserve congratulations. They have triumphed over the national inferiority complex, which tends to discredit the home-grown product. They have confounded the critics who said it simply couldn't be done. They have, in the words of a converted sceptic, "pulled off a miracle" in developing a turbine power plant that ranks with the best anywhere.

Educators and the Air Age

OUR educators have been alert to adopt the newest teaching methods in Canadian schools but this progressive view does not always apply to the subjects taught. If the students in some of our schools were entirely dependent on their text books they would not even be aware that the airplane is here. This, it seems to us, is a serious omission, for it is obvious that aviation has altered the fundamental conceptions of geography, transportation, communication, current history and international relations in peace and war. It is particularly incongruous that air education should be neglected in Canada where aviation has influenced our way of life and our economy as in few other countries.

Apparently Australia is beginning to awaken to this evident truth. Recent reports indicate that federal and state departments of education there are considering the inclusion of pre-flight training and elementary aeronautics in the secondary school studies. In many of the United States, air age education has become an important, and appealing, subject in the schools.

To our knowledge, the typical Canadian school curriculum gives detailed attention to the industrial revolution and the invention of the steam boat but casually ignores the age of flight. It would not be fair to say that the airplane is ignored entirely. One text to which the students are exposed, "A First Book of Canadian History," misinforms them that the first public flight of a plane was made from Canadian soil, an aircraft built by Alexander Graham Bell and "driven" by F. W. Baldwin. Then, the same authority ventures a prediction: "It will only be a matter of time until airplanes will fly between the centres of population in Canada as railway trains and steamships do now." Need we say more?

CANADIAN AVIATION

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