

AIR Transport Board Checks Expansion—In the latest statistical compilation released by the Air Transport Board there is further evidence that the Board has called a halt to any further expansion of non-scheduled and charter air services in Canada. Ever since government experts surveyed the air transport field some months ago and reached the conclusion that there weren't enough customers to support the proposed services, the Board has denied a large number of new applications and refused to renew licenses on many routes.

The most obvious result of this official attitude is that the total number of licensed air services in the Dominion dropped from a high point of 456 on April 28, 1948, to 432 on July 31, this despite the fact that the number of licensed scheduled operations increased slightly from 56 to 58. The complete breakdown on licenses issued as of July 31 is as follows:

Nonscheduled (specific points) — 15
(Unchanged for three months).

Nonscheduled (charter) — 190
(Down from 212 in April).

Contract—12 (Down from 13 in April).

Philanthropic—3 (Unchanged).

Specialty—154 (Down from 176 in April).

Although the majority of services operated in the red last year, there are indications of continuing interest in the air transport business. In the three months' period referred to above, the number of applications pending increased from 66 to 97 while the number of persons intending to apply dropped only slightly from 299 to 294.

THE Soaring Association of Canada, which has struggled since the war to promote motorless flight in Canada, is finding the task a formidable one. At least this is the opinion of one prominent SAC official who informed this department that excessive costs are the major obstacle to wider acceptance of gliding and soaring as a sport.

Two factors are held chiefly responsible for the present high cost of gliding: the small number of Canadians actually participating in the sport and the lack of a good low-cost utility glider.

SAC directors feel that more people would be attracted to gliding if Canadian "prestige" flights could compare with those made regularly in Europe and the U. S. Such a development seems unlikely in view of the fact that Canada's only high-per-



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formance sailplane—a British-built "Olympia" owned by Ottawa's Gati-neau Club—was written off in a crash a few months ago. New Olympias are available in Britain, but the laid-down price (\$3,200) is beyond the reach of existing Canadian clubs.

On the question of low-cost utility gliders, motorless flight enthusiasts find themselves aligned with many small commercial operators. They would like to import used machines from the U. S. but are prevented from doing so by strict government regulations. What this means to the gliding fraternity can be illustrated by the experience of a newly formed club at Windsor, Ontario. The club located a suitable machine at the right price across the border and applied for permission to bring it into Canada. Such permission cannot be granted under existing regulations—so the Windsor club has yet to become airborne.

Yet the gliding picture in Canada is not as dark as the foregoing paragraphs make it appear. For one thing, total flying time will probably reach a record high this summer—although the number of individual flights is expected to show a decrease from last year. Reason: there are fewer active glider pilots this year but they are more experienced and, therefore, able to make longer flights.

It will be recalled that the Soaring Association had planned to operate an instructor's school at Carp, Ont., this summer. Unfortunately, D.O.T. approval of gliding operations at

Carp was received rather late in the season and the school's opening has been postponed until 1949. Since three different instructional techniques are presently being practiced at various clubs in Canada, SAC directors consider the school an absolute "must." It is felt that an official attempt should be made to accurately evaluate the different methods with a view to developing an approved "standard" system for use throughout the Dominion.

RCAF Expands Steadily—According to the latest figures made available by Air Force Headquarters, the RCAF is still expanding at a slow, but steady, rate. Authorized during the last session of Parliament to recruit beyond the 75% strength figure of 12,150, the force reached a total strength of 12,609 on July 31. Of this total, 1,253 were officers.

The present encouraging picture is in sharp contrast to conditions in existence at the turn of the year. On Jan. 1, 1948, the RCAF boasted a force of only 11,637 and was understaffed in many important groundcrew trades. Furthermore, the Service was losing men through retirements and discharges faster than it could bring in replacements. Since then over-all strength has increased at the rate of about 140 a month and, although there are some minor gaps, there is no longer a shortage of essential groundcrew.

At the current rate of intake it would take the RCAF more than two years to reach top authorized strength of 16,100. However, in view of Defense Minister Brooke Claxton's recent announcement that a three-services recruiting drive would get under way before the end of the year there is reason to believe that goal will be reached in 1949.

FLYING Clubs Active—Despite cool weather and the high cost of living, private flying is apparently holding its own in Canada. Evidence: the Ottawa office of the Royal Canadian Flying Clubs Association reports that club flying times will show yet another increase this year. This prediction is based on encouraging reports received from some of the more established clubs. Montreal, for example, logged over 500 hours in July, while Ottawa came close to 400 hours.

It remains doubtful, though, whether or not the total club flying times for 1948 will exceed those of

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