

in northwestern Quebec, the first regular freight and passenger air transport service was inaugurated in 1924 by the Laurentide Air Services, Limited.

From these beginnings the expansion has been rapid. The speed and ease of air transport played a very important part in the expansion of mining activity during recent years throughout many areas of the Canadian Shield. Aircraft have been regularly used all across Canada for forest sketching, patrol and fire suppression, while very large areas have been mapped each year by aerial photography. The basic reasons for this progress of flying in the north country are simple. The only alternative means of transportation in many cases—the canoe in summer and the dog team in winter—are arduous, tedious, very costly, and slow for long distances. Furthermore, the lakes which dot the country everywhere provided from the first readily available landing places for aircraft equipped with floats in summer and with skis in winter. The flying could all be done in daylight hours and trips could generally be postponed if weather conditions were unfavourable. As a result commercial flying throughout the north country has been able to supply a very real economic service and to show substantial progress without governmental subsidies of any kind, while numerous governmental functions are being carried out with increased efficiency and economy through the aid of flying.

The situation was wholly different in the older settled parts of Canada. Here other forms of dependable and efficient transportation were already in existence and in some phases over-developed. The only advantage flying could offer was a saving of time, and to effect this an elaborate system of ground facilities was necessary. On account of the expense entailed, the development of inter-city air transportation was left in abeyance at first until progress elsewhere would give a clearer indication of its success and value. However, the success of inter-city air services in Europe and the steady growth of the United States airway system led to a reconsideration of Canada's position in 1927. As a step in establishing a chain of airports across Canada and also to provide for the training of personnel, the flying-club movement was started with the offer of government grants and gifts of aircraft. Twenty-three flying clubs were established in the principal cities of Canada in 1928 and 1929. Aerodromes established by municipalities or by these flying clubs formed the nucleus for the Trans-Canada airway, the Dominion Government having to provide intermediate landing fields, especially through the Rocky mountains and across northern Ontario, and the weather-reporting, lighting, and radio services. (See pp. 713-714.)

Mention has already been made of the administration of aviation under the Air Board immediately after the War. At the beginning of 1923, in the unification of the defence forces under the Department of National Defence, the Air Board was abolished and the administration of aviation was placed under the new Department. At this period when both military and civil flying services were small and in the early stages of their development, the advantages of combining their administration in one department were manifest. However, the two functions inevitably developed along different lines, these differences applying both to types of aircraft and to training of personnel. With the growth of both military and civil flying, their administration in one department became less convenient and stability in the administration of aviation in the Dominion was finally reached in the autumn of 1936 by the complete separation of the military and civil functions, the latter being transferred to the new Department of Transport. Civil aviation has now become so important a part of the transportation facilities of Canada that it can best be administered by the Department which deals with railway, shipping, and highway services, to which aviation is complementary.