

THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION AND  
CANADA'S PARTICIPATION THEREIN\*

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations established "in order that international civil aviation may be developed in a safe and orderly manner and that international air transport services may be established on the basis of equality of opportunity and operated soundly and economically". The foundations of ICAO were laid at a Conference held at Chicago in December 1944 and Canada's delegates to that Conference, the Right Honourable C. D. Howe, Mr. H. J. Symington and Mr. J. A. Wilson, together with their advisers, played a most important part in assisting the Conference to arrive at the decisions which resulted in the preparation of the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

In order to understand the development and growth of ICAO, it is necessary to know something of what preceded it. While earlier attempts were made, particularly in Europe, to devise methods of international co-operation in respect of aviation, it was not until after the end of World War I that anything of great significance was achieved. The matter was considered very fully at the Versailles Peace Conference and, as a result, the International Convention for Air Navigation was signed at Paris in October 1919. The International Commission for Air Navigation (ICAN) which was established pursuant to that Convention filled, to a somewhat limited extent between the Wars, the place now occupied by ICAO. That Convention dealt mainly with the technical aspect of international flight and was designed to foster technical co-operation in the air. The membership of ICAN consisted mainly of European States and its scope was largely technical in character. Canada was a member of ICAN and was represented at many of its meetings but, owing to geographical position and the fact that the United States was not a member and Canadian civil aviation at that time was almost entirely domestic, the international consequences of Canada's participation were quite limited in character.

As a result of the great technical advances during World War II and the vast development of air transportation for military purposes, air transportation became a most important factor in world transportation. A number of Governments recognized, while the War was still in progress, that adequate provision for "order in the air" on a world-wide basis was absolutely essential. The United States took the lead and invited about 52 allied and neutral States to participate in a Conference which convened at Chicago in November 1944. Canada was keenly interested in planning for the future in the field of aviation and on Apr. 2, 1943, the Right Honourable W. L. Mackenzie King said in the House of Commons: "The Canadian Government strongly favours a policy of international collaboration in air transport and is prepared to support in international negotiations whatever international air-transport policy can be demonstrated as being best calculated to serve not only the immediate national interests of Canada but also our overriding interest in the establishment of an international order which will prevent the outbreak of another war". This statement is still the basis of Canadian international aviation policy. Before the United States convened the Chicago Conference, preparations were being made for Canada's participation in it and the Canadian draft convention on civil aviation, which was the earliest available complete plan, was

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