

(February 21st, 1938)

## The Future of Air Transportation in Canada

BY THOMAS WAYLING

CHAIRMAN, PRESIDENT T. D'ARCY LEONARD:—The future of air transportation in Canada is a subject to stir our imaginations. People are turning more and more to the air as a means of travel, and we are fortunate today in having to address us a man who knows his subject so thoroughly. Mr. Thomas Wayling, as a member of the Press Gallery at Ottawa, has been a keen student of Canadian affairs, and particularly interested in aviation. So much so, that he has earned for himself the title of "flying reporter." Just to mention a few of his journeys by air I should tell you that he crossed the Atlantic in the R100, travelled across Canada with the first air mail service, and flew down the Mackenzie River to the Arctic. In fact one chairman, introducing him at a meeting he was to address, declared he must have been the inspiration for the title "Gone with the Wind."

MR. WAYLING:—Mr. President and Gentlemen: In talking about the future of aviation in Canada I don't pretend to talk as an authority of any kind, but rather as a passenger and a writer of air mail letters, like the rest of you.

Once upon a time, I had the idea that I might become a pilot, and with that in mind I went to get some instruction. The first thing that happened was that I was sent up in an instruction plane with dual controls. We did all kinds of things and I was beginning to feel quite happy. I piloted the ship for a while and felt I was rapidly becoming an accomplished pilot. Then the instructor said: "One of the first things a would-be pilot must learn is how to

come out of a stall." He told me to pull my stick back. I did and we went up a little steeper. "More," he said, and kept at me till I did finally achieve a stall, and we slipped back, spinning all over the place. The instructor struggled and struggled and was at last able to pull us out, but not before I had become thoroughly scared. Next day I read an article that expressed the opinion that a pilot had one chance in a hundred thousand of surviving against one chance in ten thousand for a Passenger.

So I decided to remain a passenger, and, in that capacity, have travelled over almost every part of Canada in almost every kind of weather, and I have never felt anything but the greatest security.

Canada has made, I think, the greatest progress in the air of any nation. We stand first in the matter of the carriage of freight. We carry everything from boilers to books. One man in the north-west wanted a pair of heavy draught horses to work at his mine. There was no way for them to go overland or by water, so they just chloroformed those horses, stuffed them into a plane unconscious, and flew north with them. When I read that story I was glad I had not been a passenger on that plane that journey, because I should have spent my time worrying about how long the effects of the chloroform were supposed to last.

I had enough of travelling with animals when it came to travelling with a dog. I was coming down the Athabasca River and somebody was sending along a huge police dog. He didn't like planes, and seemed to have only one object in mind right from the start—to get out and walk. The only way he could possibly get out was through a port right beside me. Most of that trip was spent in a struggle between the dog and myself. He wanted to make one straight dive into the dog's heaven, and I had to stop him.

I might have become an observer, for in that job someone else has to take charge of the flying of the plane, but I recalled the story of what happened to a pair of young men, who, during the war, were serving with His Majesty's forces in Arabia. They had been out in their machine for quite a long trip, hunting Arabs, and the pilot was not very sure where he was. He called back to the observer and asked him to check up on their position and let him know.

He waited a while but got no reply, so he called back again: "I say, old chap, you might hurry along with that position, I really don't know where we are."

"Just a minute, old man," the observer replied "I'll have it soon."

Another long wait, and still nothing happened. The pilot turned round in his seat to see for himself what the observer was doing. Then for the first time he noticed the observer had taken off his cap.

"I say, old fellow, what's the idea of taking off your hat like that?" he asked.

"Why, according to my reckoning," the observer replied, "We are just about in the centre of St. Paul's Cathedral."

Remembering that, made me think the job might be a great deal too complicated for me, and once more I decided to remain as a passenger.

It seems rather odd to me, with my experience, but there is a curious reluctance on the part of most people, when it comes to taking their first flight. Once in the air, however, all fear disappears, and I know of nobody who has taken one flight, who does not want to take another. Once you fly, you become air-minded.

And fears are unwarranted, for danger has almost been eliminated entirely. Gone are the old barnstorming days, when pilots flew machines all over the country, taking up passengers at five dollars a time.

The story of an old Scot well illustrates the methods that were used in those days.

Old Sandy badly wanted a ride, but he was a man who kept a pretty tight hand on the bawbees. He had his wife with him at one of the flying-fairs, and the barn-storming pilot wanted ten dollars to take them both up. Sandy argued and argued that it was only one ride, and finally the pilot said: "Look here, I'll take you both up for five dollars, but on one condition only. If you say one word while we are in the air, you'll have to pay me fifteen."

That struck Sandy as a generous offer, and away they went. The pilot rolled, looped, side-slipped and stalled. He brought himself to the verge of air sickness, but never a word from Sandy. When they got down he turned to his

passenger and remarked: "Well, Sandy, you're a tough one." Sandy agreed but added: "Ah verra nearla spoke, the time Maggy fell oot."

But that's all over now.

You know it's amazing, how few people realize that the only way to travel is by air. It is not nearly so dangerous as trains. Only a few days ago the Minister of Agriculture started for Edmonton by train. It wasn't long before his train was wrecked. When he got to Winnipeg he changed to a plane, and finished his journey quite safely by air.

Take my own case: I flew nearly two thousand miles above the Mackenzie quite safely, but as soon as we landed and got into a car to go to town, we got into a crash. We were crossing a high level bridge, when a truck side-swiped us and nearly knocked us into the gorge.

Commercial aviation is doing tremendous things in opening up the north. Along the Mackenzie it has become the regular standard mode of transportation. When I went there, there was so much air mail that I just had to be stuffed into the plane head first on the top of the mail bags.

The Indians too are becoming air-minded, though I must admit their interest in aviation is mainly centred in its possibilities as a source of supply for gas to drive their canoes. Of recent years the Indians have become enamored of the outboard motor. As soon as he can afford it the Indian lops off the stern of his canoe and installs what he calls a Kicker. But gas in those parts is costly—about a dollar a gallon—so kickers cost a lot to run.

It did not take the Indians long to discover that when a plane comes down to refuel, and the engineer fills it with gas from a big drum, that there is always a little left over in the bottom. To this residue the Indians help themselves on the first dark night, and you can imagine what this high test airplane gas does to their kickers. They get quite delirious and whiz about the lake like boats possessed.

The airmen don't mind this, but some more venturesome spirit discovered, it was quicker, and you could get more, if you opened up a new drum. Then the air people felt it was time to call a halt. That was easier said than done, but in the end an engineer thought up a plan to discourage them. He poured a large quantity of sugar into one of the

drums which was conveniently left open. When it was used, of course, the sugar turned into carbon and in a little while all the kickers in the neighborhood were stranded with their engine completely gummed up.

Rumor has it, that the first one to go out of business belonged to the R.C.M.P.

We have in Canada a younger generation that is completely air-minded. Aviation clubs all over the Dominion are doing a tremendous job. Edmonton in particular has a very live club. Grant MacConachie, a young Canadian who got his training in Edmonton now has his own service. It is these youngsters, who are so keen on aviation, who deserve a chance.

There was a little criticism a short while ago that we were not going to use Canadian pilots for Trans-Canada Air Lines. That is not true. There are now about twenty-three Canadians being specially trained for the job. As to the administrative when Johnson was brought from the United States with a number of others, and the Government's policy in this respect was founded on the advantage of bringing the instructors into Canada, rather than sending the pilots down to the United States to learn flying. It is very definitely the policy: that Canadian Airways should remain Canadian.

One of my papers out West told me to stop writing boosts for Trans-Canada services and said we should travel by existing American lines. Now I take strong objection to that, for I think that we have in Canada the finest fliers and pilot material of any country in the world.

The depression hit us just after the first air mail services had been established in Western Canada, but things are coming back to normal now and we are beginning to train our young men again.

It is unfortunate that Trans-Canada Air Lines are not using British Machines, but the armament situation in Great Britain has left nothing for our market. But the British companies are coming over here, and the time is not far distant when we shall be making our own planes in Canada, so that Trans-Canada Air Lines will be all Canadian eventually, planes included.

I read an article the other day in which it was claimed that the United States was making the finest planes in the world. That is nonsense. The New Imperial Airways machines are twelve per cent better than anything that has yet been built. I travelled on some of their planes last year. I flew to France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, and my experience was that the British planes were far more comfortable and much more steady than any others. It is amazing to be able to fly over the Channel and have lunch in mid air without even spilling the coffee when one remembers having the soup dumped in one's lap on occasion on Canadian trains. The new flying boats are amazingly comfortable, and as far as passenger equipment is concerned they are far and away ahead of anything I have seen over here.

I mention that Britain was busy making planes for defence. That is one thing we might consider here. A live and healthy commercial air service may be of tremendous importance to us here some day. The R.C.A.F. is our first line of defence, but we must have behind it all our Commercial planes ready to swing over to defence purposes.

When I was over for the Coronation I flew in the machines of the British Air Force and I discovered it was not in the least like commercial passenger flying. I very nearly missed the opportunity for I discovered myself at the wrong airport when it came time to be setting out to fly over the fleet. I tried hard to get a plane but was told there was no possibility of getting one to take me to Gosport, where I was supposed to be. But finally I found a youngster who said he would take me. About a thousand feet up the machine began to shake to pieces, and then the lad told me that it was a home-made plane. Then I got the jitters thoroughly, but the machine held together till we got to Gosport. As we reached the ground officers came dashing up breathing fire and slaughter, wanting to know what the—several things—we were doing on that ground. I produced my credentially and placated them. They led me over to fit me out for my trip over the fleet. They poured me into a heavy and uncomfortable flying suit and then fitted a gadget with a little tube sticking out of it.

"What's it all for?" I asked.

"That," said they, "Oh that's a life belt. When you hit the water, you blow into that tube, and when the belt is inflated, you swim."

That startled me for all I had expected was to go for a nice little ride and see the fleet. I found I was to go with a formation, which was to do a little manoeuvring. From a height of three thousand feet, it was to go into a power dive at the Battleships. Imagine it for yourselves one hundred and seven planes in Mass formation diving, at three hundred miles an hour, at the fleet—and me in the middle! Those machines were simply amazing. Low wing monoplanes, with a terrific turn of speed, and engines that were almost silent.

From what I saw and heard over there, I am not in the least worried about old England. The government says it needs two more years to catch up. Britain doesn't need it. She is ready right now.

I went to the Hendon air show. Hundreds of machines meeting in the sky and sailing over Hendon—line upon line, squadron upon squadron. And all manned by youngsters, with not more than six months in the service. If she can show that, what has she not got behind it? No, I am not in the least worried about England. She can look after herself, and she can do it thoroughly.

It has been said that air-mail is the life-blood of the air services. Over forty-three routes, last year, in Canada, a million and a quarter pounds of mail were carried over a million miles.

The recent growth has been amazing. In 1936 there were thirty-three air routes in operation and in 1937 there were forty-three. In 1936 the mileage was 986,314, and in 1937, 1,310,584. Mail carried in 1936 amounted to 1,153,812 pounds, and in 1937 to 1,310,521 pounds.

Pilots and ground personnel of the air-mail service are now undergoing extensive training between Winnipeg and Vancouver, over which portion of the route landing facilities, beam, and meteorological services, are nearing completion, and it is expected that similar facilities will be ready between Montreal and Winnipeg, in time for the inauguration of the through service about the first of July this year.

While it is not possible definitely to announce the schedule for Trans-Canada Air Service, it is anticipated that mail will leave Toronto about 11 p.m. and arrive in Winnipeg and Regina in time for next morning's delivery, in Lethbridge and Calgary, for the second business delivery, and in Vancouver, for the afternoon delivery, roughly twelve hours between Toronto and Vancouver, a gain over the present train service of 27 hours to Winnipeg, 34 hours to Regina, 46 hours to Calgary, 43 hours to Edmonton, and 69 hours to Vancouver.

Eastbound, the mail will leave Vancouver and Edmonton late in the afternoon, and Calgary, Lethbridge, Regina and Winnipeg after the close of business and reach Toronto, in time for delivery the next afternoon. Likewise it is expected that mail posted here in Toronto by about 10 a.m. will be delivered in Montreal, the same afternoon.

In a nutshell it will be possible to send air-mail to Vancouver say tonight, and receive a reply in approximately 36 hours, at an additional cost of six cents—three cents extra each way.

The amount of patronage given the air-mail will, of course determine its rate of advancement; that is, with whole-hearted support, it is easy to envisage even a semi-daily coast to coast air-mail service, in the not far distant future. In this connection Toronto is the largest mailing centre in Canada, and the Post Office naturally looks to this city for a large proportion of air-mail business, and judging from the manner in which it has tackled its airport problem, this city intends to retain its position as the leading commercial centre of the Dominion.

If you take the large view you will see the tremendous possibilities that Toronto has—right on the air line between Central United States and Europe—and you are bound to get business, if you get proper airport facilities. Planes are going to follow traffic and airport facilities. You can supply traffic, and are now trying to supply the port facilities.

Following the very successful trial flights with the Cambria and Caledonia in 1937, it is understood that further trials will be made this year with a class of equipment being built specially for Trans-Atlantic flying.

Air-mail transported on the Trans-Atlantic air service will, of course, be subject to a surcharge, and again, the patronage extended to this service will determine the rate of development. By the time the Trans-Atlantic service is inaugurated, Trans-Canada service will be extended to connect at seaboard, whereby it is anticipated that air mail will be transported between Vancouver and London in two days.

It is less than twenty years since the first letters were air-borne between England and France. In 1919 there were about 3,000 miles of airlines in the world. Today there are more than 300,000.

Beginning the twenty-third of February this year what is known as the Empire Mail Service, in which Canada participate, goes into service. Under it all letters and post cards for Empire points in Africa, India and Malaya will be carried exclusively by air, as the normal means of transmission.

The postage rate is six cents per half ounce for letters and four cents each for post cards, which provides air mail for an additional three cent stamp, and reduces the present rate by 75 per cent.

This scheme represents a saving in time for air mail as against surface transport of eight to ten days to India, twelve to fourteen days to Malaya, and ten days or more to South Africa.

At the present time air mail leaves London, England, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday for Khartoum, then on to Durban semi-weekly. It is expected that this service will be extended to Australia, possibly this summer, and then to New Zealand soon after.

One thing I should like to mention as a matter of aviation policy. We have Trans-Canada as a government line and the government should stay with that only, leaving feeder lines to commercial corporations. If it enters that field, we are liable to have another white elephant like the railways on our hands.

It all depends on you and the support you give aviation as to where we are going. You want to get over your ground-hog complex and get up in the air. The way to travel and see things is by air. On the ground—by train or

car—you get a patchwork effect, but in a plane you get the complete picture of the countryside before your eyes, and it is well worth seeing. The scenery is magnificent.

We all have a complex of fear. If we have not been up we think it is not safe to go up, but after all when you think of the amount of flying done and the small ratio of fatal accidents you will see there is not a great amount of risk. The newspapers are responsible for a lot of your fears. A plane crashes into a mountainside in a fog and the papers play it all over the front page. A bus goes over an embankment and just as many people are killed, but it is not so dramatic and you hear a good deal less about it.

I am going to suggest that, as Toronto is going to be the biggest aviation centre in Canada, you should not be afraid to do your business by air, or to travel by air.

In England people fly all the time—you can take a regular Cook's tour all round the island by air. In Germany the growth of aviation has been amazing. At the Berlin air port the planes come and go from all over Europe at the rate of ten in twenty minutes with the same precision as trains in a railway station. That is the sort of thing we are going to have here, and it is up to you to keep up with the times for your youngsters will all be in the air.

I want you to use the air mail. You will find it well worth the extra three cents. I am a bit suspicious, though, because I hear that the newspapers dropped forty thousand circulation because of an extra cent. So what will you do, when it comes to three cents a letter?

It all turns on you, and I hope that within the next year every one of you will have been in the air. And if you don't like it up there, there will be something the matter. If you will tell me, I will try to find out what it is. You will find, that in a plane you can read, write, or sleep, more comfortably, than you can in any other form of travel. Until you have actually flown, you will not know what real comfort in travelling is.

In conclusion I want to wish you and your airport good luck. I am looking forward to landing on it one of these fine days, instead of on a bumpy field about ten miles north from which you ride in, sitting on the mail bags.