

# Editorial

It would be hard to pinpoint the first time a businessman put an aircraft to work for him but it was a well established procedure in the U.S. and Canada before the Second World War. Imperial Oil started in 1921 and Consolidated Mining & Smelting of Trail, B.C. was one of the first to have a fleet of aircraft working for it in the 1930s. The big move forward in business utilization came after the war when enterprising individuals and companies seized the opportunity to put surplus military aircraft to commercial use.

Most of the early owners in that period were the big name families and those of us who got started in business aviation did so as glorified chauffeurs to the wealthy. Some of the names at the time were the Holts of Montreal (with three amphibians), Lord Beaverbrook, Sir James Dunn, J.P. Bickell, George McCullagh, E.P. Taylor, K.C. Irving and John David Eaton.

We travelled the millionaire circuit and spent a lot of time awaiting the "master's call", but we proved a very significant point. These people could move freely at their wish, whether for business or pleasure, carry their mounds of luggage and conduct their lives at a higher level of efficiency. As the years passed, the pattern changed. More and more companies looked at the time-saving capabilities of the private airplane and put it to their use. The growth figures are convincing.

Imperial Oil and the other corporations who had used aircraft before the war simply continued their flight operations as a matter of course — a job done at the best dollar value. It was a long ride from Toronto to Calgary in a DC-3 but the wartime "gooney birds" were fitted for comfort and a lot of work could be done enroute. Even the airlines were not travelling much faster in those days and there



**Fred W. Hotson**

Fred Hotson was born in Toronto and received his early education in Fergus, Ont. He joined the de Havilland Aircraft Company Ltd., from Central Technical School in November, 1935 and served in all departments to Foreman of the test flight department during the Tiger Moth days.

He obtained his pilot's licence and air engineer's certificate in 1938 and, during the same year, test flew his home-built Heath Parasol sportplane. He left de Havilland in 1941 to join the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan as pilot-instructor at No. 9 Air Observer School. In 1944, he moved to the RAF Transport Command with Canadian Pacific Airlines, where he completed 20 Atlantic delivery flights.

Following the war, Fred did a number of aircraft deliveries to South America and worked as a bush pilot in Northern Ontario and Quebec. In 1948, he became private pilot for Major A.P. Holt, flying a Grumman Mallard. He moved to business flying as Chief Pilot for the Ontario Paper Company and continued in that capacity for 16 years. He was a founding Director of the Canadian Business Aircraft Association and served as its President in 1964.

In 1966, he conducted a study in Afghanistan for ICAO on the use of STOL aircraft and in the following year, rejoined de Havilland as a test and demonstration pilot. It was in this capacity that he was sent to Norway and Afghanistan as flight instructor on Twin Otters. He joined D.H. product support in 1969 and acted as Sales Engineer with de Havilland until his retirement in 1978.

He has been a Director of the Canadian Aviation Historical Society since 1966 and has served as its President for the past 15 years. In 1980, he was made an Associate Fellow of the Canadian Aeronautics and Space Institute and during 1982-83 wrote the history of DHC, "The de Havilland Canada Story".

was still a considerable edge in the matter of trip scheduling.

Most of us, in the early business flying days, were transport oriented from the Second World War and a new vocation came into being — the corporate crews. Pilots, co-pilots, maintenance and service people fitted quickly into this specialized trade. Most of the flight training was organized through the airlines, either directly or through a pilot friend. A series of successful operations built up in the major locations, Toronto, Montreal, Calgary and Vancouver. There was a certain amount of similarity between each of the operations and each was a power unto itself, reflecting the very personality of the company involved.

The millionaires of the 1950s traded their yachts and planes with regularity and I was able to move into the era of true corporate flying. Instead of the long waits in sunny climates it became a round of weekly trips, the president and vice-presidents most of the time but accountants on some days and engineers on others. All trips were funnelled through the traffic department and we became a part of the company transportation team. We were still using 180 mph equipment but because most of our stops were off the airline path, the question of competition never arose. The aspect of being "on call" still remained and personal family schedules had to be built around the job. As pilot, you became a vital part of the company life, even to the little private things like checking the weather for the president's annual garden party.

With the combination of pressurized cabins and turbine engines in the 1950s, a whole new era of transportation was born. The air traveller moved out of the bumpy lower altitudes at greater speeds than the piston equipment could ever provide. The airlines, particularly Air Canada, quickly availed themselves of turboprops and then came the pure jets at nearly twice the speed. For a while, corporate aviation was left flying converted bombers and the comfortable but outdated piston aircraft. The need to catch up was so great that the manufacturers began designing special aircraft for all branches of business flying. By 1965 they had a line of small turboprop and pure jet aircraft for business and private use. The speed gap with the airlines closed and the versatility and efficiency factors grew.

Corporate aviation reached maturity with the advent of the business jet, safety was increased and trip regularity was improved. Suddenly, two trips a day could be scheduled where only one was possible with a DC-3. The crews adjusted to a new lifestyle, with still more waiting time than air time — but home more often.

Now, in the 1980s, the numbers of the executive aircraft, both fixed-wing and helicopters in use today attest to their acceptance as part of the corporate travel structure.

The "Royal Barge" is dead, killed by the adverse personal tax structure and modern business practice. More and more, the corporate aircraft is referred to as "an effective business tool" and, although repetition has dulled the phrase, I can find no better term.