

CANADIAN BUSH FLYING

The reputation of Canadian fliers throughout the world was established by the exploits of thousands of young Canadian fliers in the sky battles during the first Great War. More than 4,000 Canadian pilots were trained by the Royal Flying Corps in Canada at this time, forming about one-quarter of its total strength. In addition there were 3,500 cadets in ground training courses at the time of the Armistice. These were large numbers then for a small country.

Led by such "aces" as W.A. (Billy) Bishop and W. (Billy) Barker, many of these wartime fliers looked for a career in Canadian aviation after the war. They naturally turned their attention to bush flying and built up Canada's reputation in this field to world-wide renown. There existed then in Canada large areas of wild country, rich in natural wealth, whose only means of transportation were the canoe and dog sled. Because this country was dotted with small lakes, natural airdromes for seaplanes in summer or skiplanes in winter, flying services rapidly developed. No elaborate weather forecasting or communications facilities were required as most of the flying was done in the daytime and when the weather was good.

Commercial bush flying from the first filled a real economic need in Canada and was able to pay its way without Government subsidy. These swiftly-expanding bush lines were primarily responsible for opening up the northern parts of Canada and greatly helped the development of such major industries as mining and trapping.

Air freight, which had its inception along Canada's northern air routes, kept increasing in volume until at the outbreak of the last war the Dominion fliers were carrying the world's record tonnage of commercial air cargo. From 1920, when the rather insignificant total of 6,740 pounds was carried by air, the loads gradually became larger until 1937, when the record volume of 24 million pounds was carried by air in Canada. Even in 1939 Canadian air freighters moved 19 million pounds, as contrasted to the 9½ million pounds carried by United States carriers the same year. In 1946 almost 23½ million pounds of freight was carried by air in Canada.

One of the first of these bush and commercial air operations in Canada was inaugurated in 1919 by a returning Canadian first Great War flier, Stuart Graham, who now helps to