

TOP YEAR FOR TCA

In 1958, Trans-Canada Air Lines provided the travelling public with the greatest transportation capacity in its 21-year history, and carried a record-breaking number of passengers estimated at 2,757,000. This was revealed by President G.R. McGregor in an annual review released by the Company at the end of the year. In expanding its activities to meet the ever-increasing demand for air transportation, TCA offered more than two billion seat miles, an increase of 19 per cent over the previous year. Approximately 1,632,090,000 revenue passenger miles were flown, a rise of 17 per cent. The percentage of passenger occupancy decreased, as planned, from 71 per cent to 70 per cent.

Carriage of mail, express and freight remained at approximately the 1957 level with some 10,000,000 mail ton miles, 2,500,000 express ton miles and 12,680,000 freight ton miles being flown.

In 1958 additional flights were scheduled domestically and new services introduced abroad. During the year, TCA spread its international wings to Zurich, to Brussels and to Antigua in The West Indies. A non-stop flight began between Montreal and Paris, linking the two largest French speaking cities in the world with direct service.

Western Canadians in particular shared in TCA's international route expansion, with the introduction of a new trans-Atlantic schedule from Vancouver to London, England, stopping en route at Winnipeg. This "Hudson Bay Route" enables passengers from Western Canada to travel to the United Kingdom on a through flight without change of aircraft and reduces flying time between Winnipeg and London - for example, by two and a half hours eastbound and four and a half hours westbound.

Twice-weekly service to Antigua commenced in mid-December on the Bermuda-Barbados-Trinidad route.

Domestically in 1958, TCA included Edmonton in a transcontinental Super Constellation service, linking Toronto and the Alberta capital with a non-stop flight. A new direct service was also inaugurated between Calgary and Saskatoon. In addition, the airline increased flight frequencies on many other routes.

TCA, the pioneer user of propeller-turbine aircraft in North America, extended Viscount service to 12 more Canadian communities: Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, North Bay, Timmins, Earlton, Rouyn/Noranda, Val d'Or, Sydney, Stephenville, St. John's and Gander.

Significant too, was the increase in passenger capacity and flight frequencies on the Company's transcontinental and trans-Atlantic routes. During peak operations, TCA provided more than 650 daily round trip seats across Canada and more than 1,000 round trip seats each week across the Atlantic.

One of the highlights of the year was the introduction by TCA and other member IATA carriers of an economy class fare for travel across the Atlantic. This low cost service has enabled many more Canadians to enjoy the advantages of trans-Atlantic air travel and has greatly broadened the air transportation market.

On January 1, 1958, and in spite of a general trend towards rising costs and increased consumer prices in most Canadian industries, TCA reduced its tourist class fares by up to 20 per cent. This came at a time when major United States airlines had been granted an interim six and a half per cent fare increase and were applying for more. TCA also extended the Pay Later Plan to its domestic services.

Throughout the year, TCA provided trans-continental all-cargo service with North Stars, each capable of carrying nine tons of commodities. This offered next day delivery to points within a 1,500 mile radius and second day delivery to points beyond. Traffic remained highly directional with the bulk of air cargo moving from East to West.

A total of 16 propeller-turbine Viscounts and another Super Constellation were added to the fleet, bringing the number of these types operated to 47 and 12 respectively. However, late in the year a Viscount was destroyed when a Seaboard and Western Super Constellation collided with it on the ground at New York. Four more Viscounts and an additional Super Constellation will be delivered early in 1959.

It is expected that by 1961 TCA will become the first intercontinental airline in the world to operate an all-turbine fleet, and throughout the past year, all departments of the airline have been engaged in thorough preparation for introduction of the new equipment types.

Of major importance was the commencement of construction in 1958 of a \$20,000,000 overhaul and maintenance base in Montreal designed specifically for turbine-powered aircraft. This facility, the first of its kind in the air transportation industry, will take care of TCA's future fleet of DC-8 Jetliners and propeller-turbine Vikings.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that the first DC-8 flew successfully in California on May 30. TCA's first jet aircraft is well advanced, with its delivery expected in the fall of 1959.

Also of major importance to the Company's present fleet was the installation of weather radar and wing tip fuel tanks on the Super G Constellations and the commencement of a programme to equip the Viscount fleet with radar. The radar units enable pilots to avoid weather disturbances and assure smoother flights, while the wing tip tanks greatly increase the capability for non-stop trans-Atlantic flight.

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