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WRONES

CANADA AND THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is one of 13 intergovernmental organizations linked with the United Nations through special agreements arranged by the Economic and Social Council and approved by the General Assembly and by the organizations concerned. The Specialized Agencies of the United Nations are expert in their respective fields: labour, health, education, food and agriculture, finance and banking, civil aviation, postal matters, telecommunications, meteorology, international development and maritime matters.

Need for international action

Civil aviation, which provides a means of moving people and goods at great speed over long distances, presupposes a high degree of international co-operation. The steady improvement and sophistication of aircraft create new demands on communications, weather forecasting, air-traffic control, radio navigation and landing aids, safety standards, and airport facilities for passengers and cargo. The result is a tightly-integrated aviation system the operation of which requires experience and skill of a high order. Civil aviation -- in its present state, at least -- is principally a kind of long-range transport; in most parts of the world, air-routes must cross international boundaries in order to meet customer demands and to ensure economic viability. Safety and regularity, which are essential to efficient air services, require that ground services be first-rate and that the highest standards be maintained in such matters as qualifications for pilots' licences and specifications for the air-worthiness of planes. Regional disparities in aviation development and available resources necessitate close international co-operation and standardization.

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History

These fundamental facts of civil aviation were recognized as early as 1919, when a number of nations attending the Versailles Peace Conference set up the International Commission for Aerial Navigation. This body operated mainly in Europe, where rapid progress in aviation and a multiplicity of national frontiers combined to make the need greatest. Until 1939, there was no serious need for organization on a world-wide basis because the oceans imposed formidable barriers to even the largest aircraft of the day and made inter-