

ICAO: A REVIEW OF FIVE YEARS' ACTIVITY*

On December 7, 1944, the representatives of more than fifty nations, gathered together at Chicago, U.S.A., signed a document formally known as the Convention on International Civil Aviation, and familiarly known to the aviation world as the Chicago Convention. This document was drawn up as the final result of an international meeting convened by the United States of America in November 1944.

At the time of this meeting, the world was close to the end of the greatest war in mankind's history, a war fought with all the weapons and ingenuity which modern science could devise, a war in which, for the first time, air transportation became important in the conveying of men and materials. The Chicago Conference was designed to help aviation continue as a major means of international transportation after peace was declared. To achieve such an end the co-operation of the world's nations and of the world's technicians, working toward a common end, was necessary.

Aims of ICAO

Out of the Chicago Convention was to come the International Civil Aviation Organization, an international body which is also a specialized agency of the United Nations. ICAO's aims are best given in the preamble to the Chicago Convention: to develop international civil aviation so that it may help to create friendship and understanding among nations and peoples of the world; to avoid friction and to promote that co-operation among the peoples upon which the peace of the world depends; to promote the orderly growth of international civil aviation throughout the world so as to meet the needs of the peoples for safe, regular, efficient and economic air transport; to prevent the economic waste caused by unreasonable competition; to promote safety in flight.

It is obvious that ICAO cannot realize its aims to the full unless and until it receives the support of the world as a whole. At the present time, although fifty-five nations are members of ICAO, nations whose airlines operate more than ninety per cent of all international civil air transportation, a number of nations are still absent from the membership list, one of these being the U.S.S.R. Subject to the conditions laid down in the Chicago Convention, they are one and all welcome to become members of the Organization, providing only that they agree to adhere to the principles of the Convention and to accept the corresponding responsibilities.

The Nature of ICAO's Work

The work which ICAO carries out falls into three general categories: air navigation (in particular, the safety and regularity of international flight); the economic aspects of transportation by air; and international air law. It is fitting that on this occasion we take stock of the work of ICAO in each of these fields.

Air Navigation

Until now, the most important work of ICAO has been the creation of international standards and recommended practices to unify the technical aspects

*Based on a statement made by Dr. K. N. E. Bradfield, Vice-President of the International Civil Aviation Organization, December 7, 1949.