

and the Conference is threatened with disruption, if not a total collapse.

But it does not collapse. Instead, delegates forge ahead in a true spirit of internationalism. Partisan differences are hammered out peaceably and are resolved. And on December 7, the Chicago Conference ends in a flourish of good will and international celebration.

ICAO is born. A Convention is signed by all 52 Contracting States. And the world of international civil aviation will never be the same again.

While some in the aviation community may have viewed the outcome of the Chicago Conference with uncertainty, the spirit of internationalism soared as World War II drew to a close. And perhaps nowhere was this spirit more evident than it was among those who began drawing up plans for the interim world organization, the Provisional International Civil Aviation Organization (PICAO).

**The vision of peace through civil aviation really began in 1943 at the Tehran Conference when President Franklin D. Roosevelt presented to Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin a document preparing for peace by transforming military air bases into civil airports.**

With Canada having been selected as the host country, the Canadian Government immediately began planning for the Organization's headquarters to be located in Montréal. A city that was then, and remains so today, the country's most cosmopolitan and international city and its hub of international civil air transport.



Within six months of the closing of the Chicago Conference, a Canadian Preparatory Committee, based in offices overlooking Dominion Square in the heart of the city, swung into action. And on August 15, the first-ever meeting of the 20 States elected to the Council was convened in the Windsor Hotel, adjacent to the Square.

It was to be an auspicious debut. For on the opening day of the meeting, the end of World War II could be proclaimed. While the war did not officially end until surrender ceremonies were completed in September, hostilities essentially ended the day before the Council met.

In light of this, several Council Representatives, in their opening remarks, heralded August 15 as the "first day of peace." An excellent omen for an Organization which, for the past 50 years, has contributed immeasurably to peace and understanding between nations on every continent.

Some nine months later, from May 21 to June 7, 1946, the First Session of the PICAO Assembly was held at the same hotel, attended by 44 Contracting States and ob-

*"If the brightest spot in ICAO's history had to be stated in a phrase, it would be that the habit of the nations taking council together to reach agreement upon what specific actions will best advance the common objective has been thoroughly established."*

*Dr. Edward Warner  
First President of ICAO Council,  
upon his retirement in April 1957*

servers from 10 States and eight international organizations.

It was here that Montréal was selected as the location for the permanent Headquarters of the Organization, over Paris, Geneva and an unspecified city in China.

Another extremely important decision taken at the Assembly was the approval of Italy's attendance as an observer. Moreover, it went one step further and authorized the Interim Council to invite all ex-Axis States to participate, albeit without the right to vote, at all PICAO meetings.

It was on April 4, 1947, that the permanent International Civil Aviation Organization came into being with a total of 46 Contracting States. Today, they number 183. ➔