

AERONAUTICAL SECTION



A department devoted particularly to the application of aerial methods in forest conservation and generally to the promotion of sane civil aviation in Canada.

GEN. MITCHELL, U.S.A.S., OPTIMISTIC

By George A. Mackie.

CANADIAN aviation circles have recently experienced the pleasure and inspiration of a visit from two aeronautical experts from other countries, in the persons of General William Mitchell, assistant chief of the United States Air Service and Commander Christie, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.C., Attache of the Royal Air Force, British Embassy, Washington, D.C.

These two experienced pilots flew in separate machines from Detroit, Michigan, to Camp Borden, Ontario, a distance of 195 miles in one hour and forty minutes. While their flight was an entire success, the same cannot be said of their landing. They had failed to act on the advice of Canadian aviation officers who recommended that they replace the wheels of their landing gear with ski runners. As a result the wheels of their machines were destroyed through landing in deep snow and the further trip from Camp Borden to Ottawa was made by train.

In the course of an interesting address before the Canadian Club of Ottawa, General Mitchell expressed his opinion that Air Services for all forms of transportation in time of peace, with radio as a necessary auxiliary, would in time be as cheap, irrespective of the great speed, as safe, and, perhaps, more practicable than present means of transportation and communication. Transportation by air was to him the logical transportation, where water and deserts and mountains provided no barriers. Air roads were limitless. A height of 44,800 feet had been reached. The only thing that curtailed an aviator was engine capacity and reliability, and these were increasing every day. There was no question that the present engine would be improved greatly. It would soon be possible to circle the globe on one charge of gas.

The War had brought big development in aeronautics. A country without an air service would have been immeasurably hampered and beaten by an army having such a service. But then the air service was used only for short distances as a rule. In the next war all would be changed. Aeroplanes would be mobilized in a minimum of time. Now the power of water to hit was being employed. A charge of trinitrotoluol, exploded in water, had many times more effect than if exploded in the air, as it made the water like steel.

General Mitchell told of his landing at Camp Borden a few days previously, and being driven eight miles to a railroad station, which had taken as long as to fly the 200 miles from the United States, a matter of a hundred minutes. One horse could drag 1,000 pounds 21 miles a day. In the air, an aeroplane could take 1,000 pounds 400 miles a day. There was nothing remarkable in taking one's lunch in Washington and dinner in Chicago or Milwaukee. It cost about 60 cents a mile to travel by air in a 400 horse power machine.

Civil aviation might be so organized that it would be less hazardous than other transportation means. The cost, which was now three times as

much as on railroads was being constantly reduced, and in time it would be much lower, irrespective of speed.

The Canadian Air Board was congratulated upon its efficiency. General Mitchell thought the problem of flying in Winter would be solved in Canada. That done, Canada had easy and quick access by the north to Europe and Asia. The Winter provided landing places everywhere except in timber limits. Aeronautics would solve the country's geographical drawbacks, and people could go straight through to their destination. All that was needed was organization.

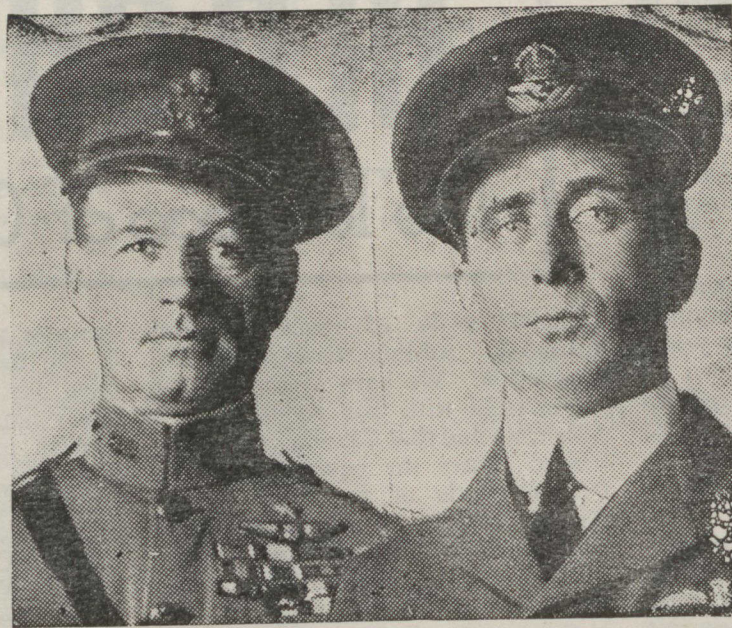


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Gen. Mitchell (left) assistant chief of the United States Air Service and Commander Christie (right) air attache of the Royal Air Force, British Embassy, Washington