

1948

Book Reviews

Recommended Citation

Book Reviews, 15 J. AIR L. & COM. 370 (1948)

<https://scholar.smu.edu/jalc/vol15/iss3/10>

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BOOK REVIEWS

PERSONAL AIRCRAFT BUSINESS AT AIRPORTS, by Lynn Bolinger and Arthur H. Tulley, Jr. (Harvard Business School, Division of Research, Soldiers Field, Boston 1948, pp. xiv, 348. \$4.25.)

One does not read far in "Personal Aircraft Business at Airports" before realizing that the story unfolded in this book presents a valuable key to the sound development of aviation. The volume contains an analytical study of personal aircraft, sales and service operations in the United States, based upon first hand information obtained by the authors and their associates from investigation of 180 fixed base operations in 40 states. Additional basic data was collected through discussion with municipal, state, and CAA officials.

The authors present along with their analysis of the current fixed-base operator's dilemma, many helpful suggestions for correcting the plight of the personal aircraft business. For instance, they point out that present day personal airplanes and courses of flight training differ very little from the Jennies of 1918 and World War I training methods respectively. A so-called modern vehicle is plagued in its development by being patterned after an airplane which for military purposes was heavily constructed, required a large landing area, and was designed to do spins and stalls. Therefore, if the personal aircraft business is to have a firm footing for development, aircraft manufacturers must produce aircraft which are utilizable, practical, safe, transportation vehicles and are not merely instruments designed for training the military.

Unlike some Harvard Business School publications, this Personal Aircraft volume covers the subject matter with purposely broad intent. The report is divided into 3 parts. Part I, which is entitled "The Essential Characteristics of the Business and Its Products," contains a report of the characteristics and basic problems, gives a historical development of the problems of growth of the business, and thereby, to a certain extent, forecasts what is to be found in Parts II and III.

"Financing and Management of Fixed-Base Operations" is the subject discussed in Part II. The businesses analyzed to compile this part range in size from the one-pilot-instructor-and-one-airplane-renting-space-in-hangar to the operation which totals hundreds of thousands in investment. It is most interesting to note that many of the larger installations surveyed are owned and operated by men who have succeeded in other and often unrelated industries. Their attraction to aviation has been due to the following causes, first, a belief in future expansion of a new industry, and second, a fascination (perhaps unbusiness-like, but nevertheless most cheering to one's thoughts) for engaging in the business of operating aircraft. Sufficient reasons are given for this successful man's participation to recommend that all of approximately 8000 fixed-base operators in the United States today should seek out and obtain the services of the best business men in their communities as advisers and directors of their aviation interests.

Part II is of particular interest to the fixed-base owner. In it one will find a complete analysis and break down of the costs allocable to the various departments of the fixed-base operation—flight, maintenance shops, and concessions. Cost and control systems used for general aircraft operations are given a thorough review and highlight the fact that every owner must make a similar study to assure profitable utilization of the various divisions of his operation. The authors point out that many operators are actually losing money on departments which they believed to be profitable

simply because they failed to properly allocate operating expenses.

Part III, "Fixed-Base Operations at Publicly Owned Airports," endeavors to answer the many questions which confront those operators who would seek to take advantage of the benefits of the Federal Airport Program. Here are presented workable solutions to problems discussed by the hour when administrators of municipal government, state aviation directors, fixed-base operators, and CAA officials meet. Many interesting tables and facts are added in appendices to the book.

A first impression of this book would prompt one to believe that it will be used mainly as a reference by fixed-base operators. After having completed reading the book however, the reader realizes that there are many others who could read it with profit. "Others" are municipal and state officials, airport managers, manufacturers of aircraft, and those who guide CAA policy. The average fixed-base operator might do well to open this book at Chapter 8 which has the provocative title, "Profitability of Fixed-Base Operations." The facts divulged there will not put at ease the mind of a man who may have thousands of dollars invested in flight operations, airplane sales and service. The next step for this operator reader, providing he can hold to the task of comparing his business with the many fixed-base operations reviewed, will be to read all of Part II with a coldly analytical eye. Prior to completing this part, he will have pencil and notebook at hand and will have set down and noted phases of his own business for an evaluation study. He will have many ideas for readjusting his own operation.

While reading the book, the reader's thoughts will again and again return to the contents of Part I. There the future is arraigned before the mistakes, efforts, and background of the past. That the surplus aircraft of World War I retarded the development of the airplane and forced a trend which is still controlling aviation progress is unquestioned. On the other hand is it fair to say that the OX-5 engine and the Jennies were insurmountable obstacles beyond which the science of aeronautical engineering could not pass? Similarly, could this period of retarded development properly be recognized as a part of the cycle of development of any new form of transportation. We have the super-pilot and buzz-boy counterpart in the auto era, the Indianapolis Speedway Races of pre-World War I days, and the bicycle "scorchers" of the 1890's were undoubtedly the devils of their day.

The question capably developed and raised by the authors is: "Where does the personal aircraft business go from here?" All those persons interested in the development of aviation can thank the authors for presenting the answer to the question in the same volume. We must treat the personal airplane as a means of transportation beginning now. Every flight, all of our thoughts, and all of our plans must be directed toward that end. If this program is followed, we will find the personal airplane can assume maturity as a form of transportation quickly, perhaps within half a decade.

CHARLES E. COX, JR.*

THE STORY OF AIR TRANSPORT, by Jim Ray. (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1947, pp. 104. \$2.50.)

In this volume Mr. Ray presents a brief and interesting history of the development of air transport in the United States. The eleven chapters deal with the development of transportation in this country, the success of the Wright brothers, the initial efforts in air mail transport, the expansion of air mail service and construction of airways, the beginnings of passenger air transport, the expansion following the return to private transportation of air mail in 1934, the services of air transport companies and

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personnel in World War II, postwar aircraft, the inauguration of air freight service, the establishment of feeder lines and helicopter mail service, and recent developments in passenger service and safety.

The book is written in popular style and is intended for people with a general interest in the subject rather than for students of the field. Approximately 100 illustrations and diagrams are included. It will be useful in stimulating in young readers an interest in air transportation.

H. W. T.

WORLD AVIATION ANNUAL—1948, by J. Parker Van Zandt, Editor-in-Chief and John C. McClelland, Executive Editor. (Published jointly by Aviation Research Institute, 903 16th St. N.W., Washington, D. C. and the James Jackson Cabot Professorship of Air Transportation of Norwich University, Northfield, Vermont, 1948, pp. 544. \$17.50.)

In this, the first edition of the World Aviation Annual, policy makers and students of every phase of worldwide aviation—manufacturing, transport, airports, economics and regulation to name a few—are rewarded with a unique condensed compilation of heretofore hopelessly scattered data.

The text is divided into ten major segments. Part I gives the World Perspective including worldwide passenger and postal traffic, world aviation organizations: ICAO, UPU and FAI and a presentation of multilateral aviation agreements. The succeeding eight sections cover specific geographic areas: Part II—North America, Part III—Greater Europe, Part IV—Middle America, Part V—South America, Part VI—Africa, Part VII—U.S.S.R., Part VIII—Asia, Part IX—Oceania. The final Part X is entitled "Economic Notebook" but treats only the Uniform System of Accounts as prescribed by the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Board and certain selected characteristics of some of the airlines of the United States. The appendix is made up of a metric-English conversion table, the system of symbols employed in U.S. aircraft designation and a compilation of aviation records.

In each of the geographical divisions of the text, the countries embraced are dealt with in alphabetical order. For each individual country, insofar as available, data have been presented in a standard pattern: organization (government and non-government agencies), military aviation, aviation history, international agreements, manufacturing (major airframe, engine and accessory manufacturers with thumbnail sketch of history, products and production and financial data), aeronautical imports and exports, scheduled airlines (historical development, capitalization, management, routes, personnel, equipment, operating and traffic statistics), non-scheduled airlines, airports and airways, other civil aviation activities and air travelers' guide (best season for travel, rates of exchange, entry requirements, etc.). For ready reference, each page carries the country name and the subject treated.

The treatment of United States aviation is understandably extremely detailed, taking up more than 200 pages of the text. The detail of the coverage given all of the other countries is generally proportionate to their importance as factors in world aviation and the availability of data on them. Of especial interest to many, although necessarily brief, is the report on Soviet aviation which was written by the specialist, Ellsworth L. Raymond.

Throughout the statistical tables both English and the metric units are given with the latter being the common denominator. Similarly, cost and revenue figures are generally presented in United States currency with conversion rates noted.

The scope and detail of the Annual's presentation may be evidenced by a few random examples:

"Generally speaking, every sizeable Soviet city is served by air transport. The fare from Moscow to Vladivostok, for example, is \$323 at the official rate of exchange, or about 6½¢ per mile. On short runs fares average 8½¢ per mile. (Average domestic American rate is about 5¢ per mile)." . . .

"Alaska has more civil aircraft registered in proportion to its population than any other state, territory, or country in the world. (Alaska, p. 284)." . . .

"KLM, the Royal Dutch Airline, employs pilot personnel of 12 different nationalities, including 50 Canadians, 32 Australians, and 22 Americans. (Netherlands, p. 354)." . . .

"At least three Italian aircraft concerns are reported to be working closely with Argentine companies in the production of aircraft, engines, and aeronautical instruments in Argentina. (p. 474)."

Doubtless in so comprehensive a project, certain inadequacies and inaccuracies are inevitable but they appear to be few and far between. It is hoped and assumed that future editions may be more liberal in specifying the sources of data. Irrespective of this or any other picayune criticism, the World Aviation Annual is a monumental reference work of unique utility for all the aviation world. It fills a great and long standing void in aviation reference literature.

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