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THE LICENSING OF AIR INSTRUCTION

FLOYD E. EVANS*

Initially the work of our State Aeronautics Board was the licensing of airports and landing fields used for commercial purposes and the licensing of schools of aviation and aviation instructors. Our regulations pertaining to licenses have been changed from time to time during the past four years to meet changed conditions and requirements.

We believe the so-called "gyp" flying school has been completely eliminated from our State. Where formerly we received complaints almost daily from individuals and Better Business Bureaus on the activity of schools of questionable standing, we now rarely have a complaint. Whether this fact is entirely due to our regulations and their enforcement or due partly to changed economic conditions we are not, of course, certain, but we do feel that our regulations have had a beneficial effect and our remaining school operators are very much in accord with our regulatory activity.

Accidents in student instruction have fallen off to a point where one is actually a news item. Formerly hardly a week passed without an accident to a student pilot. Here again it is hard to determine if the requirement as stipulated in our regulations is the cause of the decrease in accidents or whether it is merely because there has been a decrease in training activity.

The enforcement of our licensing requirements which was once a rather difficult problem has eased up materially in recent years due to the cooperation of our airport managers and license holders. Nearly all are thoroughly in accord with our requirements and consequently are inclined to report violations and aid in enforcement. We have full cooperation of our State Police Department in the enforcement of our laws and regulations and an occasional check up by a uniformed State Trooper has a splendid effect on keeping everyone in line. We realize however there is some so-called "bootleg" instructing but feel that it is negligible compared to the licensed operation.

Our basic requirement for all instruction is that it be done on a licensed landing field and in licensed aircraft, regardless

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whether such instruction is for hire or not, also that the instructor shall hold an effective U. S. Department of Commerce transport license before being eligible for a state flight instructor's license.

Schools may secure licenses for any one of four classes, namely—

- A—Transport School
- B—Limited Commercial and Private Pilots' School
- C—Amateur Pilots' School
- D—Aviation Ground School

Minimum curriculum requirements agree in almost every particular with U. S. Department of Commerce approved schools for the several types of schools. The requirement that students shall be instructed in recovery from stalls and spins before soloing has long been one of our requirements. All schools must have at least two airplanes available for instruction and must have suitable classroom facilities to accommodate all students enrolled.

Schools and instructors are prohibited from advertising under "Help Wanted" classification in any publication and must not imply in their advertisements a guaranty of employment unless proof can be produced that such employment is assured.

A flight and also theoretical written test is given to all applicants for flight instructor's license. The flight test is very similar to the present U. S. Department of Commerce transport pilot's test. We feel that this test is desirable, as many applicants passed their transport test years ago and have since allowed themselves to lag backward in their flying precision. Further we have found some recently licensed transport pilots who are erratic in their flying. They may have been able to qualify for a transport license the day of the transport test but were unable to pass a satisfactory instructor's flight test.

Our theoretical written examination consists of twelve questions. These questions are a cross section of suggested questions submitted to us by existing licensed instructors. They cover nothing but practical points that an instructor should pass on to his student. We endeavor to get not only logical answers to our questions but answers so written that if they were given to a student he would thoroughly understand and remember them.

These written examinations are a recent addition to our requirements. We believe they will result in raising the standard of our instructors.

After four years of experience in licensing of aviation schools and instructors we believe that such licensing has many beneficial effects and feel that if this licensing work cannot be taken care of by the U. S. Department of Commerce it should be taken care of by each state aeronautic department. It is felt that this licensing is as much a duty of the federal department as is the licensing of pilots and aircraft. Federal licensing will surely have the effect of establishing uniformity of practice which is very doubtful to secure if each state sets up its own standards.