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AVIATION PROMOTION AND EDUCATION*

FLOYD E. EVANS†

The subjects of aviation education and promotion are both broad ones; consequently, when the two are brought together in one paper it is apparent the writer has the possibility of very broad discretion in his discussions. I am, in this paper, taking full liberty of being as broad in scope as possible and will attempt to outline the work that can and should be done by state aviation bodies along both lines of promotion and education.

It is, of course, quite natural that I should refer to the work that is being done by our own Michigan State Aeronautics Department, not that I feel that our activity should be a yard stick for other states, but in my opinion we are doing everything possible with limited personnel to educate our citizens aeronautically and to promote more and more flying within the boundaries of our state; and I therefore recommend similar activity in other states.

It is felt that our work during the past year, quite similar to that of previous years, has been of such nature that it could be almost entirely construed to be, not only educational, but promotional. During the first two weeks of March of this year when construction work was at its lowest point, due to our severe weather conditions, we devoted almost all of our time to the promotion of the activities of the National Aeronautic Association. Mr. Fred L. Smith, Assistant to the President of the National Aeronautic Association, visited our state for a week and together with the writer, my able assistant, Mr. Steers, Mr. George Haldeman and several other enthusiastic N. A. A. members attended booster meetings at noon and night at different cities carrying on with what we termed our three ring circus, where Mr. Smith made a preliminary talk followed by each of the other members of the troop, each speaker emphasizing certain phases of the N. A. A. activity which we felt were beneficial for the promotion of aeronautics. The talks were then followed by colored aerial moving pictures presented by our outstanding N. A. A. member, Mr. Fred Bradley of Rogers City.

As a result of this excursion four new N. A. A. chapters were

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organized, a great amount of enthusiasm instilled in four other chapters and a large number of new N. A. A. members secured. We feel that the N. A. A. is a vital factor in the national promotion of aeronautics and we are doing everything we can in our state to further its interest.

Our next major activity consisted of the sponsoring of the Second Annual State Airport Conference at which over two hundred state, county and city officials and representatives of chambers of commerce were in attendance. Outstanding speakers included Col. Sumpter Smith, Major McMullen and Charles Horner. We feel very definitely that the persons in attendance at this conference were reinoculated with aviation interest; and the newspaper publicity that resulted from this conference did a great deal to increase the interest of many of our public officials who before were but lukewarm on the subject of airports and aviation.

During late spring our department sponsored the annual State Model Airplane Contest at the Capital City, Lansing. This has been an annual affair during the past six years, sponsored by the State Aeronautics Department. Several hundred boys from various parts of the state participated in this all day contest and a great amount of interest was aroused, as has been the result in years past. This model plane activity should be a part of the activity of all state aeronautic departments, for unless we interest the youth of our country in this work we will not be doing our part in the general education of the American public in aviation. Incidentally, controlled gasoline model activity, a much debated subject, is encouraged in our state.

Since early this spring, as soon as weather conditions permitted, airport construction and town marking work has been in progress in our state superintended generally by our State Aeronautics Department. The number of W. P. A. and C. C. C. Airports under construction or being improved varied in number from twenty to as high as forty-nine during the summer. This included the development of our own new state airport at the Capital City, which we are endeavoring to develop as a model airport.

Our town marking program was fairly well completed during the year 1936 with the marking of approximately 450 towns under the W. P. A. program. About fifty additional towns were marked during the present construction period leaving only about fifty towns yet to be marked in our state.

Last winter and early spring, while the State Legislature was in session, our State Aeronautic Department sponsored a number

of aviation bills, all of which successfully passed the Legislature, but several of which were vetoed by the Governor due to absolute lack of funds or due to constitutional objections. The one in which we were particularly interested and which was considered unconstitutional, was a state zoning law which prohibited the erection of any obstructions in the vicinity of licensed airports. It is apparent that public opinion must be built up in our state in an effort to change our constitution in order to get this bill enacted.

Another bill sponsored by the Aeronautic Department called for an annual maintenance appropriation from the State General Fund for all publicly owned airports and landing fields in the state. The passage of this bill by the legislature, even though vetoed due to lack of funds, established a precedent and we feel very optimistic of eventually getting such a bill passed biennially to guarantee the maintenance of our many landing facilities.

Prior to the submission of any bills in the Legislature a so-called "State Aviation Legislative Conference" was called at the Capital City where all airport managers, operators, pilots and others interested were called into conference and the several proposed bills discussed in detail and suggestions and recommendations asked from the industry on legislative matters. We expect to make this a biennial conference where everyone in the industry will be invited to criticize our existing laws and recommend changes in them as well as new legislation pertaining to aeronautics.

Early in April of this year the State Aeronautic Department sponsored an exhibit at the Detroit-Michigan Exposition. This exhibit consisted of the display of a miniature model airport fully lighted with revolving beacon and airplane mechanically circulating overhead, airway maps, airport drawings, and a sound picture of Pan American Airways trip to Rio de Janeiro. This exhibit attracted many thousands of persons who attended this exposition and no doubt did some good in aviation promotion.

Our State Department took a very active part in the sponsorship of the State Air Tour during the summer, and also endeavored to organize a number of week-end aviation excursions to places of interest in the northern part of our state. These week-end excursions were not at all successful this year but we feel they can be built up and made a very worthwhile activity. The State Air Tour was a marked success with approximately forty planes making an eight day excursion through the entire state stopping at many points of recreational interest. This tour will, no doubt, continue to be an annual affair and the State Aeronautic Department will be active in its conduct.

Quarterly bulletins are issued by our Department which give the public and the industry all information on airport constructional activities, a summary of all action taken by the State Board at their regular meetings, including the listing of all new licenses of airports, managers, instructors, etc., and the appropriations made from the State Aeronautics Fund with the purpose for which such appropriations were made.

Periodic airport condition notices are issued in order to keep the flying public informed of the condition of all of our landing facilities.

The first official state airway map was published by our State Department this year. We feel that this map is as fine as has ever been published and contains all information that an airman requires to successfully navigate in our state. As a supplement to this airway map a booklet including detailed drawings of every airport and landing field in the state was published and given general distribution, particularly to all airport managers and private plane owners. The second edition of this booklet has now been prepared for distribution showing the fields brought up to date as of December 1st, 1937.

In an effort to call the attention of the public to the beauties of Michigan as a tourist and resort state, and also to the existence of the many fine landing facilities in our resort areas our department is cooperating with the publishers in the publication of a pictorial booklet similar to the one published in Florida known as "Florida From the Air."

Other activities of the personnel of our Aeronautical Department, which are truly promotional and educational, are the frequent attendance at various conferences and conventions, including the tourist and resort association meetings, state hotel managers' conventions, county road commission conferences, meetings of the State Municipal League, American Legion meetings, Exchange Club, Rotary, Lions and other service clubs in an attempt to keep before the businessmen and city and county officials the fact that continued progress is being made in airport development work and that there is likewise a continued increase in the use of the airplane both for private use and for pleasure. We can definitely back up the latter statement in our state. Our department is financed entirely from the revenue derived from the aviation gasoline tax of three cents per gallon with the exception of the tax on gasoline used by transport operators operating intra-state

who receive a refund of one and one-half cents per gallon. Our receipts for the fiscal year ending July 1st, 1937, were 45% above the previous year, which in turn were 61% over the year preceding that. Our receipts for the past fiscal year were approximately \$47,000.00 of which about \$25,000.00 will be expended for the actual overhead operating expenses of the department and the remainder will go into airport and landing field construction and maintenance of airway beacon operation.

Incidentally, our department installed and has been operating during the past five years, fourteen airway beacons along two intra-state airways.

Our direct educational program, that is actual instructional work in public schools, has been curtailed materially during the past year as compared with the two years previous due to the lack of suitable instructors. We had at one time, during 1935-36, as high as 1800 students enrolled in our relief program ground schools in approximately thirty-eight communities. We feel that the results from this ground school activity were gratifying; however, our instructors were not up to the standard we would like to have had. As a result we have not pushed this course with a great deal of enthusiasm during the past year.

In an effort to stimulate instruction on aviation subjects in our public schools our state department several years ago published a booklet in cooperation with the Aviation Committee of the State Educational Department which included many suggestions as to how aviation subjects could be incorporated in the present high school curriculum.

I hope you will pardon my continual reference to what has been done in Michigan in this paper. However, I feel that we are covering the work of promotion and education quite thoroughly and that, if all states were doing the things that we are now doing and anticipate doing each year in the future, great strides will be made in aviation; first, in the construction of many new airports and the improvement of existing airports, and further, by the continual publicity and promotion that will result from the activity of State Aeronautic Departments toward forming favorable public opinion on the airplane as a transportation vehicle.

I might add that our department uses an airplane in the conduct of our business as much as possible. An additional airplane has been acquired jointly by our State Police, State Highway Department and State Department of Conservation for their official use and there is every indication that there will be one more plane in

use in our state within the next year by other state departments in the conduct of official business.

In conclusion I give below a summary of activities which I feel from experience covers the work that every State Department of Aeronautics could well follow and by so doing contribute the greatest amount of good to the aviation industry:

1. Conduct a sound legislative program formulated from a cross section of the opinions of those engaged in the industry in their respective state.
2. Promote new airport construction and improvements on existing airports. Annual airport conferences will aid materially in this work. Construction of a model state airport should be a part of the work of all state departments.
3. Airmark all towns and cities and maintain these markings.
4. Promote model airplane activity and aviation instruction in public schools.
5. Promote week-end air tours and state tours.
6. Issue periodic bulletins to the public and to the industry on state aviation activity.
7. Issue state airway maps and detailed field drawings periodically.
8. Cooperate with transport operators in securing funds for the erection of every possible navigational aid.
9. Bring aviation before the general public at every opportunity such as displays at State Fairs and State Exhibitions, talks to service clubs, city and county official meetings and hotel and resort association conventions.
10. Cooperate in every way possible with the building up and maintenance of membership in the National Aeronautic Association.
11. Enforce state and federal air regulations and license such activity as is deemed advisable in the particular state.
12. Cooperate at all times with the Bureau of Air Commerce in the work of construction, promotion and enforcement.