

FOREWORD



April 10th 1937 was the day that aviation in Canada emerged from an era of bush flying into the coming age of modern aviation. This was the day that a dream was to become a reality; this was the day that Trans Canada Air Lines was born by an act of Parliament. It was determined that pilots would henceforth fly through clouds and not around or over top of them. Safety, Comfort and Schedule would guide the aircraft of the future. It would still be many years before the Airline Industry would sweep passenger trains from the rails and ships from the Atlantic, but it was a beginning.

The history of Canadian aviation is filled with conundrums, impediments and obstructions, many of them brought by competitiveness of newly formed companies, and much by Government incompetence. Most of the stories of those early days are of barnstormers and bush pilots, men who flew courageously, in untrustworthy air craft, without navigational aids and with limited resources. Many stories are told of the multitude of companies that failed during the great depression that swept the land, no company was unaffected. However by 1935 the country was beginning to emerge and the prospect of a transcontinental air service was being discussed.

Much has been written of Clarence Decatur Howe and the emergence of the Department of Transport in 1936. Almost immediately the Government commenced building an airway system from Vancouver to Newfoundland. Airports were being finished in the cities with intermediate landing strips added every 100 miles or so across the land. Radio range towers for navigation were being erected and communication and meteorological personnel hired. Behind the scenes there was discussion and negotiations as the National Airline evolved. These exciting years are the background for the dynamic picture that Chris Weicht brings to us in his book, "Trans Canada Airway".