Navigation emphasized
in the
Governor-General’s Race

Point-to-point accuracy pays off in Canada’s light plane classic

By Dorothy Rungeling

When this magazine contacted me a week previous to the Governor-General’s Cup Air Race and asked me to do a story on the race I had little idea the beautiful cup would stand in the room with me as I wrote the story. But it’s here in a very stately pose in our living room.

The race put on a new face this year when it was changed from a pylon race to one which necessitated accurate navigation as well as speed.

The race was open to pilots holding any type of license providing they were not flying for hire. Eleven entrants were on hand by noon at Toronto Island Airport on Friday, September 7 and their planes went through the handicapping procedure during the afternoon and were then impounded until the race the next day.

De Havilland Aircraft of Toronto went all out to help by supplying three of their aerodynamic engineers as well as two pilots and their Otter aircraft to do the handicapping. First, each plane was lined up in front of a stroboscope to ascertain if the tachometer was indicating correct rpm. Then each plane was flown by a de Havilland pilot alongside the Otter at 1,000 ft. at the particular plane’s maximum continuous rpm to find the speed of the plane in miles per hour.

In my opinion this is the only place where improvement could be made in the handicapping system. Since “maximum continuous rpm” is wide open for some planes and perhaps 300 rpm less than wide open for others, it seems that the plane handicapped at less than wide open has a definite advantage. It would seem fairer to everyone to have every plane handicapped wide open. It has been proven from previous races that pilots will fly their planes wide open even though it means running at a much higher rpm than maximum continuous rpm.

After each plane was flown, the speed of that plane was computed, taking current winds aloft into consideration, to the time it should take to cover the race route.

Stover’s Choice The actual route was a dandy. Charlie Stover of Shell Oil Co., who was chairman of the race committee, confessed to having picked out the five turning points in the 203-mile route and I must say he did a commendable job. How he ever dreamed up such points no one knows. He sure made it tough.

No one knew what the route would be until an hour before the race, when each contestant was supplied a map with the route marked. To make it good and hard, no airports or cities were used as turning points. Instead, road intersections out in the country and very small villages served the purpose.

At each turning point a race official was posted along with a ham radio operator to make sure which planes flew over the points. Failure to fly over every turning point resulted in disqualification. As each plane passed a turning point the information was radioed back to the Island.

The first point was a road intersection between Milton West and Acton, a distance of 29 miles from the Island. From there planes turned in a southerly direction for 49 miles to another road intersection midway between Simcoe and Jarvis. Turning northwest from here, the next turning point was the village of Plattsville and from there to another village, Alma. After passing Alma we turned southeasterly back to the first check point near Milton and then back to the Island, making a race of 203 miles.

Planes were flagged off from the starting line at time intervals deter-
In second place, flying a Seabee, was Herb Hawkins, of Markham, who flew over the finish line four minutes behind me. In third place was Bill Smith of Toronto, flashing over the finish line in a Cornell just a couple of seconds behind the Seabee.

The slowest plane and the first one off was an Aerocar, while the fastest one was a Mooney Mark 20.

Since each plane was handicapped at what it should do using the current winds aloft, it made it as fair for the slower planes which might have to buck a headwind longer than the faster ones.

From all appearances the race committee put forth a good deal of effort this year to ensure a smooth running race. Officials at turning points were supplied with full information on all the planes entered so that they could easily identify them even if they missed seeing the race number. Aerial pictures were taken of each turning point and were shown to contestants before take off to give them an idea of the appearance of the five turning points.

> Canadians Not Aware. Pre-race publicity was not what it should be, but it never has been in this race. This should be a big race in Canada, drawing entries from all over the country and it certainly could be if it received proper publicity. After all it is supposed to be the Canadian version of England’s Gold Cup Air Race and with proper publicity it could be just as famous.

So the Cup race is behind us for another year and tomorrow and next year we can practice keeping track of all the sideroads we fly over so we won’t feel quite so flabbergasted when next year’s race route is handed to us.

planes ahead of me were. As I approached the Island over the water, I could see a number of planes in the circuit and concluded that the others had beat me in. However, after buzzing the finish line and coming in for landing, I noticed Jack Judges, a television cameraman taking pictures of my landing. As I rolled up to him he put up one finger. This was the first intimation I had that I had won the race. All those other planes in the circuit had merely been visitors arriving for the air show.

It was a great thrill to have again won the Governor-General’s Cup, against such good competition. My handicap speed in the Cessna 170 was 132.2 mph which was just about what I averaged on the race.

MISS VALERIE CHELTENHAM became the first woman to be checked out in the new Mooney Mark 20 when she flew the four-place plane from Kerrville, Texas, to Vancouver, B.C. She is a saleswoman for Garner Aviation, Vancouver, Mooney distributors for Western Canada...