Report from China

Our Board of International Editors (see inside front cover) is asked to prepare one article or editorial capturing significant events in their respective countries. Wang Nan-Show is our International Editor from China, and has provided an editorial by He Wenzhi. Wang Nan-Show serves as Vice President of the Chinese Aeronautics and Astronautics Establishment.

Thomas M. Weeks
Editor-in-Chief
Journal of Aircraft

Outlook for Chinese General Aviation

He Wenzhi is currently serving as Vice Minister of the Ministry of the Aero-Space Industry. In July 1988, he delivered a speech to a symposium on the policy of developing general aviation in China. His speech provides an outlook for the development of the general aircraft market in China.

Wenzhi has a distinguished career in Aeronautics, following his graduation from the Aeronautical College of Qing Hua University in 1952. He has worked for the Nan Change Aircraft Company and the Chinese Helicopter Design Research Institute. He has served as Vice President of the Chinese Society of Aeronautics and Astronautics and as a Professor at the North-Western Polytechnical University, Nanjing Aeronautical Institute, and Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics.

Wang Nan-Show
International Editor
Journal of Aircraft

On Developing Chinese General Aviation

He Wenzhi
Vice Minister, Ministry of Aero-Space Industry

Chinese General Aviation at Present

Our policy must be based on the present reality. This is the right attitude towards the matter. But what, then, is the present reality in the nation's general aviation?

I. Foundation Has Already Been Laid and Achievements Scored

Starting with locust killing and forest protection in 1951, Chinese general aviation has developed a fleet of more than 200 aircraft. Its business has expanded into other areas. But most of the operations are still involved in agriculture and forestry. Let's just look at the case of the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) from 1951-1987. It has accumulated 610,000 hours of agricultural operations covering an area of 1.27 billion mus of farmland, 260 million mus of aerial afforestation, and 15 million mus of aerial sowing of grassland. This really is a great achievement. Progress has also been made in industrial aviation, such as remote sensing, photographing, surveying, power-line erecting, minerals and resources exploration, oil mining, scientific research, video taping, ambulance services, security patrol, coastal environment monitoring, etc.

The manufacturing of Chinese general aviation aircraft started with the first copy production of the Soviet Antonov II (Chinese designation: Y-5). With the help of Soviet experts, the Y-5 aircraft was well received by users in all related circles for its safety, reliability, low altitude performance, good equipment, and multipurpose capability.

It is understood that there are still 12,000 An-II aircraft in service in the Soviet Union. The Soviets are still buying the aircraft from Poland to reinforce their current An-II fleet. The Polish have a production rate of over 300 aircraft per year for the Soviet Union and eastern European countries. China is a developing country. We must first make full use of our current aircraft fleet, and then rely on our own production of aircraft. That's the realistic way to develop our agricultural aircraft in the present socialist primary stage.

The production of Y-11 aircraft was jointly decided by six ministries. The aircraft was certified in 1977 by the State Aero Products Certification Committee, but only 27 were produced. To put these aircraft into operation, the Ministry of Aviation Industry has been set up, in cooperation with the Ministry of Geology and Minerals and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, the Feilong (Flying Dragon) Company, and the Xinjiang General Aviation Service Team. Their services have been appreciated since their very beginnings. They show that there are bright prospects for general aviation in China.

II. There Is Still a Long Way to Go

At present, there are about 26,000 agricultural aircraft in the world, compared with 200 or so in China, which is about only 2-3% of such aircraft in the Soviet Union and the United States, and even fewer than those in Australia, Poland and New Zealand. According to the figures published by the International Agricultural Aviation Center in 1982, only 38.5 million mus of farmland were treated by agricultural aviation in China, which represented only 2.6% of the total cultivated area, compared with 40-50% in developed countries.

The Chinese government is now working at medium- and long-term science and technological development programs in accordance with Premier Li Peng's Report on the Government Work. We will work out a medium- and long-term development program for the aerospace industry in which the development of general aviation aircraft constitutes an indispensible chapter.

III. Supply Falls Short of Urgent Demand

China is a large country. The development of general aviation aircraft lags far behind the requirements of the