

BY J. G. DONLEY

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO

COPYRIGHT, 1935, BY

NEW YORK, DEC. 11.--THE FLIGHT OF THE "CHINA CLIPPER" IS ANOTHER FEATHER IN THE CAP OF AIR TRANSPORTATION, ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE SPECTACULAR ACHIEVEMENTS WHICH HELP TO "SELL" THOUSANDS OF ADDITIONAL POTENTIAL PASSENGERS. BY VIRTUE OF SUCH STRIKING ADVANCES, THE INDUSTRY, IT WOULD SEEM, IS FINDING MORE TO DO IN ITS EVERYDAY JOB OF CARRYING PASSENGERS, MAIL AND EXPRESS.

BUT IF YOU TALK WITH THE MEN WHO GO OUT TO SELL AIRLINE PASSENGER ACCOMMODATIONS, YOU GET A DIFFERENT SLANT. THEIR EXPERIENCE IS THAT THE DAY HAS PASSED WHEN THE PERSON PLANNING TO MAKE A JOURNEY BY PLANE ASKS QUESTIONS ABOUT SAFETY. FOR SOME TIME NOW, THEY SAY, PROSPECTIVE PASSENGERS HAVE BEEN MAINLY INTERESTED IN WHETHER THE COST IS GREATER THAN RAILROAD FARE AND HOW MUCH TIME WILL BE SAVED.

IN THE INDUSTRY, IT IS FELT THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRANS-PACIFIC LINE WAS JUST ANOTHER PART OF THE DAY'S WORK. AND IT IS DECLARED THAT THE NEEDED EQUIPMENT IS AVAILABLE TO START TOMORROW ON A TRANS-ATLANTIC LINE WHICH COULD BE PLACED IN OPERATION IN A COMPARATIVELY SHORT TIME, WERE IT NOT FOR THE ATTITUDE OF SOME OTHER NATIONS. BERMUDA IS AN ALMOST INDISPENSABLE BASE FOR A SOUTHERN ROUTE OVER THE NORTH ATLANTIC, WHICH MEANS THAT ENGLAND HOLDS THE TRUMP CARD.

REGULAR LINES HAVE BEEN OPERATING ACROSS THE SOUTH ATLANTIC TO SOUTH AMERICA FOR SOME TIME, USING EUROPEAN EQUIPMENT, AND THERE IS SAID TO BE SOME PRESSURE TO KEEP AMERICAN EQUIPMENT OFF THE PROPOSED NORTH ATLANTIC ROUTE. CONFERENCES LOOKING TO PRELIMINARY AGREEMENTS FOR A TRANS-ATLANTIC LINE WERE BEGUN IN WASHINGTON LAST WEEK, BUT DECISIVE ACTION STILL SEEMS SOME DISTANCE OFF.

"THE NEXT IMPORTANT PIECE OF AVIATION NEWS IS LIKELY TO BE A REDUCTION IN PASSENGER FARES," ACCORDING TO LESLIE E. NEVILLE, MANAGING EDITOR OF "AVIATION". THERE ARE SOME GOOD BUYS ON THE RAILROADS IN SPECIAL ROUND-TRIP OFFERS, HE SAYS, PREDICTING THAT AIRLINES WILL EVENTUALLY CUT FARES AND CHARGE FOR MEALS.

DONLEY -2-

A FIRST CUT ALREADY IS IN EFFECT, IN THE FORM OF AN INTER-LINE AGREEMENT ON THE SALE OF "SCRIP" AT 15 PER CENT DISCOUNT FOR ALL FARES. SOMEWHAT LIKE THE OLD-TIME RAILROAD "MILEAGE BOOKS", THE NEW "SCRIP" MAY BE BOUGHT IN \$250 AND \$500 LOTS, AT \$212.50 AND \$425, RESPECTIVELY.

THE "SCRIP" PLAN HAS BEEN IN OPERATION ON SOME LINES FOR A LONG TIME. BUT MOST OF THE MAJOR LINES ARE ADOPTING THE PLAN NOW, SO THAT THE STANDARD SCRIP BOOK WILL SOON TAKE IN ALL LINES. MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN THE SAVING IN TRAVEL COSTS, TO THOSE WHO USE THE AIRLINES FREQUENTLY, IS THE EVIDENCE THAT THE BIG AIR TRANSPORTATION COMPANIES WHICH HAVE LONG PADDLED THEIR OWN RUGGEDLY INDIVIDUALISTIC CANOES ARE CAPABLE OF CO-OPERATIVE EFFORTS FOR THE GOOD OF ALL.

THE AIRLINES ARE INCLINED TO ANTICIPATE SOME REDUCTION IN RAILROAD FARES IN THE NORTHEASTERN SECTION OF THE COUNTRY, FOR THAT DISTRICT IS STILL NOTED FOR ITS RELATIVELY HIGH PASSENGER RATES, AS COMPARED WITH THE WEST AND SOUTH. IN THE SOUTH, ONE AIRLINE, OPERATING REGULARLY BETWEEN DALLAS AND CHARLESTON, S.C., BY WAY OF ATLANTA AND BIRMINGHAM, ALREADY IS ADVERTISING PASSENGER RATES OF A "NICKEL A MILE".

THAT LINE HAD TO CUT ITS RATES BECAUSE THE RAILROADS REDUCED THEIRS; AND THE RAILROADS HAD TO COME DOWN BECAUSE THE BUSES CUT UNDER THEM.

THE LONGER AIRLINES ARE MOST RELUCTANT TO CUT FARES BECAUSE THEY OFFER PASSENGERS THE GREATEST INDUCEMENT IN TIME SAVED. THEY ARE ABOUT FOUR TIMES AS FAST AS ORDINARY RAILROAD TRAINS AND TWO OR THREE TIMES AS FAST AS THE NEW STREAM-LINED TRAINS. BUT ON SHORT JUMPS, A GREAT DEAL OF THE TIME SAVED IN THE AIR IS LOST IN GETTING TO AND FROM THE AIRLINE TERMINALS, SO THAT LOWER FARES BECOME AN IMPORTANT SALES ARGUMENT.