

The Development of Pioneer and Semi-Official Air Mail within Canada, 1918-1934.

The **purpose of this exhibit** is to study the development of air mail within Canada from 1918 to 1934 though pioneer flights and the semi-official air post. A few covers from 1927-1928 show how and when the Post Office started discontinuing semi-official air mail and contracting air routes instead.

Importance. The first pioneer air mail flights were single experiments by World War I pilots. Eventually, far-sighted innovators found financing for airlines that operated competitive businesses. Those private initiatives opened vast areas of Canada's wilderness and started Canada's air mail. By contrast, the Post Office committed no resources for expensive adventures where planes often crashed.

Some companies petitioned the Post Office for the right to fly air mail at an additional fee. From 1924 to 1934, the Post Office allowed fifteen airlines to use semi-official stamps (called "stickers" and "labels"). Many tons of air mail were carried. Until 1927, planes flew in stages under 300 kilometres. By 1929 better equipment established longer routes from the Atlantic to the Pacific and even the Arctic.

Starting in January 1928, the Post Office gradually phased out the semi-official system by contracting airlines to fly mail on routes with demonstrated demand. To help pay for the high cost of flying, the first Canadian 5¢ air mail postage stamp was issued on September 21, 1928.

The **development is chronological** by semi-official stamp issue, then chronological by flight. Airline dates are for first and last air mail flights.

The **treatment is aerophilatelic**, including good coverage of pioneer flights, most of the semi-official flight origins and destinations, a large selection of airline handstamps, a variety of users, all the

commercial covers the exhibitor could find, a few multiple rates, maps of routes, photographs of planes and pilots, and airline ephemera. Details about semi-official stamps are included where appropriate.

Research includes handbooks, articles, newspapers, company records, auction catalogues, government publications, and documents at Library and Archives Canada. New information verified in primary sources is spotlighted with a blue book. 📖

The **condition** of most material is excellent, but the few **commercial, government, and personal covers (identified in green)** are often in poor shape—especially if opened roughly in gritty mining offices.

Rare items (8 or fewer recorded or known) are indicated by a red plane. ✈️

EXHIBIT PLAN

1. Pioneer Air Mail Flights, 1918-1928.
2. Laurentide Air Service, Ltd., 1924-1925.
3. Northern Air Service, Ltd., 1925.
4. Jack V. Elliot Air Service, 1926.
5. Elliot-Fairchild Air Service, 1926.
6. Elliot Fairchild Air Transport, Ltd., 1926.
7. Fairchild Air Transport, Ltd., 1926.
8. Patricia Airways and Exploration Co., Ltd., 1926-1927.
9. Patricia Airways Ltd., 1928.
10. Western Canada Airways, Ltd., 1926-1927.
11. The Post Office's First Air Mail Contracts, 1927-1928.
12. Western Canada Airways, Ltd., 1928-1930.
13. Yukon Airways and Exploration Co., Ltd., 1927-1929.
14. Klondike Airways Ltd., 1928-1930.
15. British Columbia Airways, Ltd., 1928.
16. Cherry Red Airline, Ltd., 1929-1931.
17. Commercial Airways, Ltd., 1929-1931.
18. Canadian Airways, Ltd., 1930-1934.

