

## Contest Progress Report Preparations Under Way

It appears safe to predict that—barring the possible but not probable event that we shall have 16 days of continuous rain—the coming Decennial Celebration Contest is going to be the most successful one yet, and a fitting climax to ten years of achievement on the part of Soaring in the United States.

It is going to be highly successful because, first of all, every soaring pilot who has a glider to fly and can get to Elmira is apparently going to be there. Second, everything that can be thought of to make it a safe and successful contest from the operations angle is being carried out. Though there is a tremendous amount of work still remaining to be done by a number of people, in preparing for this largest contest, plans have been virtually completed and the actual preparations are well under way.

It is going to be a large contest. With regard to entries, it is still too early to estimate accurately the number of pilots and gliders to expect, though guesses run from 60 to 100 on craft. In earlier years the ratio of pilots to gliders has been 3 to 1, but with the increase of individually-owned sailplanes, the ratio this year should be nearer 2 to 1.

The Contest Board believes that, with 3 launching sites in use, simultaneously when necessary, sufficient first-class launching equipment of all types on hand, and enough trained and experienced personnel to handle the many jobs, all Federally Certificated pilots and craft that come to Elmira can be accommodated.

This doesn't mean that every pilot is going to be launched for the day as early as those who competed last year were. But prospective contestants can be assured of being safely launched on a first-ready, first-off basis within a reasonable time after they and their craft are all set.

When we come right down to it, pilots have been considerably spoiled in recent years. Not so long ago, pilots had to tear down and set up gliders a number of times a day. Now they get winch launchings to several hundred feet, with a chance to land back on the hill if unable to soar, instead of the man-power shock-cord launchings that just barely got one over the tree tops. Now they have airplane tows, whenever the winch isn't good enough, cabins, hangars, a swimming pool, and all the other facilities that are taken for granted, but which were not even dreamed of just a few short years ago.

At this time it is possible to report that cabin accommodations should be available for 260 pilots and officials on Harris Hill. The administration building has been enlarged to include a new dining hall and increased office space. Provisions are being made for greatly increased hangar facilities. New roads have been built,

permanent fences installed, the swimming pool completed.

With regard to other sites, the Airport—minus its hay crop—will be available for auto, winch, and airplane towing. The Big Flats Airport is so large that soaring take-offs from winch can easily be made under suitable weather conditions, with the benefit of a release point several hundred feet lower in altitude.

An adequate winch launching area at the base of South Mountain will be prepared, so that that excellent ridge can be used again, and the powerful thermals that boil over it from the City of Elmira. Utilities have had difficulty getting to South Mountain from Harris Hill, but once there, have been able to make respectable distance flights. Use of this soaring ridge will again be considerable as pilots appreciate that they are more than repaid for their time and effort in making the short trip to it.

The launching equipment planned for—some of it tentatively rented, though bids are being asked for in this issue—should be sufficient and at the same time provide a margin of safety, in case there are any breakdowns. Plans for equipment call for 2 tow cars, 3 mobile winches, 3 retrieving cars, and 3 tow planes.

With regard to personnel, the Contest Board is counting on the timers who served last year, plus experienced new blood. There are to be 4 complete launching teams, which will alternate on operations duties, each consisting of head and assistant timers, launching equipment and radio operators, and the other necessary helpers. There will be some 60 Elmira ground school students for assisting with operations. Other necessary personnel will include the staff needed to take care of barograph calibrations, records and statistics, public address system, publicity, and office routine.

The fact that the United States Weather Bureau now has a major station in operation at Elmira Airport solves the weather forecast situation. Mr. C. J. MacGregor, probably best known for the MacGregor Polar Year Expedition to Greenland, is chief, and he has been most cooperative in offering to provide all necessary facilities.

A number of special events are planned in honor of the Decennial Celebration. For the first time, the Warren E. Eaton Memorial Soaring Trophy is to be awarded. There will be a "C" Pilots' reunion at which it is hoped everyone who has soared at Elmira in former years will make an effort to be present. The Institute of the Aeronautical Sciences is planning to hold a meeting at Elmira during the contest.

Now, with regard to rules and regulations and what prospective contestants should plan on doing in the near future. The rules and regulations have been worked out with the remaining minor points, cleared up at a Contest Board meeting on March 25th. They will be mimeographed and will be ready to send out, together with application forms, to all prospective contestants. Send requests to Contest Board, Box 385, Glen Head, New York, and please give details on glider to be entered, cabin reservations required, and approximate date of arrival at Elmira. Cabin reservations will be made in the order that requests are received.

The important points in the rules and regulations are as follows:

1. The contest is open to all pilots and gliders that are Federally Certificated. Pilots must have, in addition, at least a "C" certificate and an N.A.A. sporting license. The opportunity will be offered, as previously stated, for experienced pilots who have not been able to earn their "Cs" before coming to Elmira, to do so between June 19th and 24th. However, the "C" must be earned by the opening date of the contest. While Civil Aeronautics Authority inspectors will be on hand to check out pilots and gliders, contestants are urged to have these matters taken care of before coming to Elmira, in order to avoid delays.
2. As stated in the March issue, pilots are to be divided into two groups, on the basis of whether they hold "Cs" or Silver "Cs". Silver "Cs", as they have the stiffer minimum requirements to meet, will be given launching precedence. However, points earned in either category will have the same cash value in the point award competition. The maximum number of points that can be earned in either category is the same.
3. Pilots will be required to wear parachutes on all distance flights away from the vicinity of take-off sites. Arrangements are being made to have a certain number of parachutes for rent and sale, though it would be wise to make arrangements for such equipment in advance of the contest. Pilots will be required to have their own barographs—whether owned, borrowed or rented—since the Contest Board cannot take the responsibility for assembling at Elmira, the large number of such instruments that will be needed.
4. An ambitious prize money goal has been set, and every effort is being made to raise as much prize money, as well as special prizes, as possible. At this time, the Contest Board cannot guarantee the exact sum that will be available for competition. Two classifications of prizes have been set up—the General Prize Money and Awards and Special Prizes. The former include the large Altitude and Distance Awards and Larger Goal Flight Prizes, while the latter include all types of prizes for specific performances that do not fall into the first category. It is up to you, as Soaring Society members, to go out and help raise additional prize money, equipment prizes, and trophies.

The Contest Board feels that soaring pilots appreciate the problems it is faced with in preparing for a contest which departs quite radically from the type held last year. For this reason, the Board urges everyone planning to enter to indicate his intentions immediately, in order that everything can be done to provide adequate facilities. With the cooperation of all interested parties, this cannot help but be the finest contest that has yet been held. And remember, accommodations for pilots and craft are being reserved in the order in which entries are received.