Candill

The Schweizer 1-21, first single-place sailplane to crack the 300 mile mark in the U. S.

LET'S THINK ABOUT IT!

By GERALD CASEY

THE FLIGHT OF DICK JOHNSON'S from Prescott, Arizona, to Governador, New Mexico, should have opened our eyes to the long overlooked hidden possibilities of soaring. Furthermore, we have allowed the distance flights of Wichita Falls that were made in a Westerly direction, to settle into the obscurity of past events. Why didn't we study the details that made these flights possible? True—we know it wasn't entirely luck, but let's try to analyze the known facts.

Based on flights such as these, we can establish our future directions.

Terrain, weather, pilot technique, and experience are important, but of first consideration should be our acceptance of the latest in ships and instruments, the obstacles of our present efforts. Instead we've defaulted by neatly tucking our knowledge into the background and assaulting the records with all the disdain of a blind marksman. Let's face it! Did we try breaking away from our old ruts and intelligently experiment with the latest theories?—Did we equip our sailplanes with the latest instruments and accessories . . . speeded to the foreground of development? —Did we branch-out from the staid pilot technique developed in obsolete ships? Emphatically, NO! We blundered along on a mound of repetitive errors and were lost in the maelstrom of an endurance derby: an endurance of aching backs, sleepless nights and light thermals. If we are intent on shattering the Foreign held records and brilliantly lighting the horizons with American achievements, we'll have to sweep away the cobwebs of the past and open our eyes to the tools on hand.

Number one of our prerequisites is a fast, modern sailplane. The SCHWEIZER'S have capably provided us with this requirement. The new "One twenty-one" is well ahead of our demands. Suitable blind-flying instruments, air to ground radio, and an open mind are our other necessities. Only you can provide the latter.

Accepting clouds solely as an indication of lift, has been our prime failure in the past. Thru becoming aware of basic Aerological Data, we will have an "Open Sesame" to new records. Let me cite an example: Intent on breaking a distance record, a pilot will fly for over eight hours and still fall a hundred miles or so short of his quest. Why? . . . Because this pilot spent the entire day circling in comparatively weak thermals and conducted his flight between the cloud base and the ground. Doing this, he ran the gamut of adverse winds and available convections. Cruising between thermals, he carried an average airspeed of 60 MPH, and his ground-speed was about equal to the same figure. At the end of the flight, our pilot, exhausted and discouraged crawled out of the ship, cursed the weather, the ship, the luck and completely ignored any possible thoughts that he alone may have been at fault.

"So what?", you may be thinking. "What's your answer?"

I'll tell you and it isn't only *my* thought. It is an accumulation of suggestions advanced by leading Meteorologists. It becomes obvious, when we begin to realize that in order to accomplish flights over 500 miles, we'll have to fly much faster than 60 miles an hour. Let's make an imaginary flight by comparison. Our flight will be a comparison with the older tactics as portrayed by "Pilot X." Pilot X has an outdated ship, few instruments and a wall of preconceived ideas. We have the latest thing in sailplanes, a non-spillable artificial horizon, complete oxygen equipment and an affirmation to try the suggested advanced theories.

It's still early when Pilot X and ourselves release from the double-tow. For the first hour, we're compelled to fly between the cloud base and the ground as does Pilot X, but because ours is a better ship,