

# CLASS CONTESTS A POSSIBILITY

## Ostiv Studies "Limited Class" Sailplanes for World Championships

More serious study and interest is continually being seen in the direction of 'class competition' for tournament soaring.

American soaring people have over an extended period of time given some thought to the matter. In more recent times however, it has been debated rather hotly by both the pro and con sides.

SOARING'S columnist EJ advanced something of a rather extreme form of it in the Nov-Dec '55 issue. He evidently went to lengths in his advocacy of the idea on the pro side in the hope that some of the thinkers on the con side might be stirred to action.

Former Soaring Champion and World Distance Record holder, Dick Johnson, immediately arose to the occasion with his most effective argument on the con side of the question, per his article 'Why One-Class Contests?' which we published in the Jan-Feb '56 issue.

It is with considerable interest, therefore, that we report a technical session to be devoted to this subject at the 6th Congress of the Organization Scientifique et Technique Internationale du Vol a Voile (OSTIV) to be held July 6th thru 13th at St. Yan, France, during the World Gliding Championships.

OSTIV NEWS, Volume I reports: "There has recently been considerable interest in the idea of a 'limited class' of sailplane for the World Championships. The President of the F.A.I. Gliding Committee (CVSM) (Pirat) Gehriger, has asked OSTIV to consider the matter and there will be a special meeting at the Sixth Congress.

"The discussion has already begun in the following articles:

- (i) B. Cijan—Aero Revue Suisse No. 8 (1955) page 278. (translated into Polish in 'Skrzydza Polska' and into Czech in 'Kridza vlasti' No. 3, 7th February 1956, page 76).
- (ii) P. A. Wills—A Limited Class for the World Championships—Sailplane and Gliding, October 1955.

- (iii) R. Johnson—One Class Championship — Soaring, Jan.-Feb. 1956.

- (iv) W. Eichenberger—Les Championnats du monde de vol a voile, subiront-ils un changement de structure,—Aero Revue Suisse 1, 1956.

- (v) Anon — Aviasport — February 1956.

"The idea is that, in addition to the open contest, there should be a contest between pilots of sailplanes which are practical aircraft, 'inexpensive to buy and to operate', to use Philip Wills' phrase.

"In the papers by Wills and in Aviasport proposals were made to limit certain factors. Wills proposed (i) max. weight 175 kg, (ii) max. trailer length 7½ m, (iii) rigging possible by four persons in fifteen minutes, (iv) serial construction possible in less than 1750 man hours, (v) limited equipment. Aviasport proposed (i) aspect ratio between 13 and 15, (ii) wing area between 13 and 15 m<sup>2</sup> (i.e. span between 13 and 15 m), (iii) ultimate factor 9, (iv) limited equipment.

"Let us consider these one by one:

(a) A *low weight* means easy handling, easy and cheap launching by winch and aeroplane and towing by a small car when derigged.

(b) *Ease of rigging and compactness when derigged* also make a sailplane easy and cheap to operate.

(c) The price of a sailplane is determined largely by the time taken to construct it on the production line. A limit here might restrict the class to sailplanes already in quantity production. How is the number of man-hours claimed to be checked?

(d) By limiting span and aspect ratio the cost is kept down. However, unless other expensive aerodynamic aids are banned (such as boundary layer suction, flaps) the cost may not be reduced. And why place a *lower* limit on span? Why ban a 12 metre glider?

(e) *Strength*. Aviasport suggests a minimum strength of the wings. It is certainly desirable that nobody shall

improve the performance by reducing the safety factor. It is indeed desirable that every sailplane shall have been fully flight tested and have been granted a Certificate of Airworthiness. How is this strength factor to be checked?

(f) The cost of equipment can be very great. Radio, oxygen and blind flying instruments are certainly expensive at present.

"There is no proposal to abolish the open class in the World Championships—to do so would hinder research and development. What is suggested is an additional, limited class which would make it easier for countries which have no government subsidy or which are in financial difficulties, to compete" There appears the possibility that a recommendation might come from the OSTIV to the Gliding and Soaring Committee of FAI, concerning the inclusion of a limited class in future World's Championship contests.

It is known, of course, that the various national soaring competitions, including our own in the U. S., are inclined to follow the patterns set by the World Championships. The fact that this question has already been widely discussed by soaring pilots in this country, and has had some publicity in the pages of this journal, would seem all for the good. Very probably it will be a question that we will have to resolve sooner than we think. It is indicated that we are at least abreast of the modern thinking and changes as they evolve in the world of soaring.

It will be hoped that it is understood that the Editor of this journal takes no position one way or the other on this particular question. This publication will continue to welcome the submission of further material on this subject and will treat it all with strict impartiality.

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it can be done, it can be done.

We in Dayton sincerely recommend to the entire soaring fraternity a full-time program of education, publicity, promotion and instruction in the art, sport and science of motorless flight. We all know that nothing succeeds like success, so let us all strive for better organization at local, state, regional and national levels. This can be achieved by proper organization, planning and a continuous effort toward high-level attainment of the goals as set forth in the Constitution and By-Laws of the Soaring Society.