

THE 1962 INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION AND THE U. S.

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The possibility of holding the 1962 International Soaring Championships in the USA was exhaustively discussed at the November 26th meeting of the F.A.I. Gliding Committee (CVSM) held in Paris. The U.S. position was presented by Dr. Harner Selvidge, SSA President. Also present was the regular U. S. representative, Bill Ivans, and his alternate, Floyd Sweet.

Representatives from 14 European countries attended this meeting at which it was hoped to pick the site for the 1962 Internationals. The Argentine had indicated it would present a bid but it was not yet forthcoming. Whether delayed or abandoned we do not know. Some SSA members have been quite interested in presenting a proposal from the U.S. but for many reasons it was impossible to prepare one in time for this meeting.

Since none were received, the closing date for bids on the 1962 contest has been extended until March 15, 1961, for action by CVSM at a meeting on April 15th. If no acceptable bids are received by then, the competition will be postponed until 1963. Since there was some possibility that this extension would give SSA time to consider making a bid, the delegates were questioned at length regarding their feelings about an international competition in the U.S. After several hours' discussion the following points seemed most significant.

1. There is little or no interest in a contest at a site in the eastern U.S. Soaring conditions there are too much like Europe. Major interest was in the middle and far west, especially Odessa, Texas, Las Vegas, Nevada, and Bishop, California. Phillip Wills, who flew at Odessa in the 1960 Nationals, feels it is a very poor place for any competition, the weather and terrain being too uniformly good. Most other delegates however obviously had record gleams in their eyes and would not reject Odessa because of this.

2. An important problem for Europeans attending a U.S. contest is the time involved. Most of them would have to count on a minimum six weeks' trip, and many cannot

get or take that much time off from their jobs. This situation is particularly bad if the site were in West Texas or the far west. Even if the aircraft come by boat and the pilots later by air, it is still about six weeks. There is probably nothing we can do about this, although a week or ten days might be saved if American crews picked up the sailplanes and trailered them to the site, and the pilots flew directly there. Which brings up another question, how many SSA members could afford to take time off for this?

3. By far the most important problem in the eyes of the European pilots is the transportation cost for getting pilots, crews and aircraft to the site. They are now investigating to see if money could be saved by assembling all the aircraft at one port for shipping on a single boat and chartering an airliner for bringing all the personnel later. However, it seemed to be the consensus that unless some transportation subsidy or assistance from the U.S. could be obtained, the chances were remote that very many European countries would attend (or vote for) a competition in the U.S. Whether this position would be maintained in the face of a strong U.S. bid without transportation subsidy remains to be seen. There is some chance that the lure of Texas or California thermals might cause some anguishing reappraisal of the bank accounts with a resulting better prospect of good attendance. Certainly, as of now, SSA has no prospect whatever of being able to furnish any transportation or subsidy of that sort.

4. It had been suggested that one way to help the aircraft transportation problem was to have all pilots fly American ships. The only equitable procedure would be to have all fly the same type such as, for example, 1-26's rented from their owners, or 1-23H's built especially for this occasion. This idea of a uniform class competition for this contest was overwhelmingly rejected by the CVSM members, so cannot be considered further as a solution to the transportation problem.

To give SSA members some idea of what is involved in putting on

an international contest, the German Aero Club is reported to have had a deficit of over \$45,000 in operating the 1960 contest at Cologne. This is despite the fact that they had towplanes and pilots furnished without expense by the German Air Force. From this, it would appear that at least \$75,000 to \$100,000 would need to be raised if the U.S. were to play host to the 1962 Internationals, and this would not include any possible transportation subsidy. This is clearly well beyond the scope of any possible SSA activity or resources. The obvious mechanics would be to set up a separate temporary organization with a small paid staff for the sole purpose of operating the competition. However, unless there were assurances of very substantial financial help from NAA, or elsewhere, it would be fruitless even to attempt to make a bid. It is not something that could be done on a shoestring. If it is done at all, it should be a first-class effort which would reflect credit upon SSA and the United States.

34,000 FT. ALTITUDE GAIN

A recent newspaper article from New Zealand states that on Dec. 17, 1960, S. H. Georgeson made a soaring flight with an altitude gain of 34,000 ft. He was flying a Slingsby Skylark 3 sailplane over the Mt. Torlesse, New Zealand, area. Maximum altitude attained was 35,500 ft. asl. If approved by F.A.I., this would constitute a new altitude gain record, the present one being 31,709 ft., set in 1959 by Karl Baur of Germany.

TIE SUPPLY EXHAUSTED

SSA's supply of soaring ties has finally been exhausted. These did not sell well and will not be restocked so no more should be ordered.

NEXT ISSUE

Barring unforeseen circumstances, the February issue of *Soaring* will feature the following: Part 2 of the 1959 SSA Symposium paper "The Handling Characteristics of Sailplanes," "Uniform Trailer Connections," "A Report on the Sisu I and IA Sailplanes," "300 Km. in the Fauvel" and "Schweizer Dealer's Meeting."

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