



## Schweizer Aircraft Corp.—Report for 1965

For the first time, the Schweizer Aircraft Corp. produced and sold over 100 sailplanes in a sales year (Nov. 1 to Oct. 31). This may not seem like a lot when compared to Cessna's or Piper's production, but the significant thing is that it's a 100 percent increase over what was sold in 1962, only three years ago, or a growth rate of 33 percent per year.

Figure one, which shows the growth of sailplane sales at SAC compared to the seven previous years indicates a substantial increase in sales volume. Sales for 1965 far exceed those for any previous year, even including the years we had military sailplane contracts. The flight activity of our dealers also shows a steady increase and the total flights made by members of the dealer organization for 1965 should exceed 50,000 by a considerable margin.

Part of the reason for this increase is the growing acceptance of flying. This plus the increase in leisure time and the booming economy have enabled more people to take up flying. Power flying is going through a marked increase of interest and in 1965 over 92,000 Student Pilots Certificates were issued. In fact, the number issued in January and February of 1966 is 50 percent ahead of the corresponding period in 1965. We think soaring will also take another leap ahead in 1966.

Another reason is that, as more clubs are formed and more dealer soaring operations are established, there is a much greater opportunity for the public to learn about soaring and to give it a try. As more commercial soaring operations get underway, we are sure that increased growth will come. As with any business venture of this kind it is necessary to make an investment and a "build-up" period is required. The encouraging fact is that it has been demonstrated that the business is there—if the dealer aggressively goes out after it in a businesslike way.

Many dealers are working toward the Soaring Center or Sports Flying Center idea. A number of ski resorts are starting to use soaring as an attractive off-season activity to help make their resorts year-round affairs. Also, the skiers are very logical soaring prospects. In fact, John Macone of Sugarbush Soaring is running a special soaring course for ski instructors so that they can instruct in both activities.

Being the only manufacturer in this country building sailplanes on a production basis we are sometimes in a difficult position to comment on phases of soaring such as foreign competition. However, we feel we can comment somewhat objectively since our company is not dependent upon soaring for its existence. Our sailplane activity is only 15 percent of our total volume and still has to be subsidized by our other work. We have been at it a long time and naturally want to see soaring get on a self-sustaining basis. Therefore, we are interested in the progress of soaring in this country.

As we have mentioned in these reports in the past, we firmly believe in the necessity of broadening the base of soaring in this country so that the sport can become big enough to support a flourishing American soaring activity. That includes a number of manufacturers of sailplanes, instruments, trailers, accessories, etc., and many clubs, soaring centers and schools throughout the country.

It seems to us that we are becoming too dependent upon foreign equipment, instruments, and accessories. We are not against foreign equipment coming in, for it adds variety to the movement and provides a good comparison for American equipment. Foreign equipment always will be with us, just as it is with automobiles and similar items. However, we feel that to have a complete, effective American program, we must encourage and develop our own suppliers and manufacturers. Our lack of this is especially felt at the International Meets where all the larger countries except the U.S. use their own sailplanes. The sailplanes and equipment are as much a part of these meets as the pilots and techniques, and we feel that our team should use U.S. sailplanes. We realize that this has not been practical in the past. It seems that a firm position should be taken on this for the future so that by the 1969 Internationals American sailplanes would be required. We are quite sure that by then there will be a good selection of American sailplanes to choose from.

In our program we have stressed the commercial operation, since we feel that this is the most effective way to introduce people to soaring and to increase soaring activities. We have stressed the production of