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THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.  
By Congressman Everett M. Dirksen  
16th (Ill) District

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U.S. vs STATES IN THE AIR.

In 1938, Congress enacted the Civil Aeronautics Act. It created a Civil Aeronautics Board, a Safety Board and empowered these agencies to give careful direction to the development of civil aviation in this country. It provided for the certification of airlines to prevent duplication and un-economical operation, made provision for safety, for the licensing of airmen, the maintenance of aids to air navigation and a host of other things that would assure a proper and reasonable development of air commerce and safety. In late 1943, after air commerce had expanded and many lessons were learned, the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce reported a new Bill which completely overhauled the Act of 1938 and enlarged the jurisdiction of the Federal Government over the navigable airspace. At once a conflict developed and charges were made that the new bill proposed to destroy the rights of states to regulate air commerce within such states. The battle was on. The bill has languished for six months without action and without assurance that there will be any action in the near future.

A LARGER ISSUE ARISES

A few days ago, the nation learned of a non-stop, cross-country flight made by a huge 40 ton plane which made the trip from California to the Nation's Capital in 6 hours and 47 minutes. It was the new plane called the Constellation, on which the Lockheed Corporation, assisted by many experts have been pioneering for 5 years. It accommodates 57 passengers comfortably, develops nearly 9000 horsepower from its four huge engines, flies at an altitude which avoids bad weather and ground turbulences, and races over the skyways at a speed heretofore unknown by commercial airplanes. Assuming that this was a 2500 mile journey you can easily determine what the average airspeed was for the non-stop trip. Nor does this represent the maximum range of the new sky Pullman. The significance of the trip lies in the potentialities of non-stop, all-weather flights from any point in the United States to many sections of the world. And with that prospect goes the problem of the rights which one nation shall enjoy as against another in the field of international transport. The aerial conflict of the states against the Federal government has been momentarily superseded by the problem of nation against nation and already conferences are in progress to determine what shall be done.

SOME PRACTICAL ASPECTS.

When a plane leaves the United States and enters the airspace of another country, it is in fact invading the domain of that country. Ultimately it must land and be re-fueled on the soil of that country. What about taxes on the fuel that is purchased. What about the citizenship of the crew? What about the servicing of the plane in that country? What about the exchange of air rights as between countries? What about trade advantages? What about safety and congestion at large airports in other countries? What about the use of weather service? What about cameras to take photographs in other countries? What about military considerations. All these spring to the fore. That there is a lure about this international air transport business in the future is attested by the fact that nearly a 100 applications for certificates are now pending before the Aeronautics Board in Washington.

THE QUESTION OF AIR SOVEREIGNTY

Some notion of the complexity of the problem ahead can be gained from the position taken by various countries concerning their sovereignty over the airspace over their own soil. If Russia for example were to exclude all foreign commercial planes from flying over her airspace (which is presently the case) she could virtually block much of the proposed flight over or near the North Pole or from Alaska to Asia by way of Russia. Such a policy, if pursued by all countries might quickly hamstring international aviation. The speed with which all major nations will move into this field after the war is over, therefore, calls for early and careful action on the part of the United States so that reciprocal rights will be obtained for whatever sacrifices we make. Truly, the conflict between Uncle Sam and his brood of States over air rights has been suddenly over-shadowed by a larger air contest.