

Where is the airport problem? CAB airline statistics indicate that one-third of the total U.S. airline passengers originate at just five airports in the U.S.; 10 generate 50%; 90 generate 90%; and the other 560 airports originate the remaining 10%. There is no factual basis to justify treating these 560 airports on the same basis as the 10 airports which are congested with transient human bodies and burdened with all the attendant problems of handling people, including terminal buildings, ticket and counter areas, parking facilities, rest rooms, restaurants, and public transportation.

GENERAL AVIATION ANALYZED

Business Aircraft.—Considerations of the very real problems facing a relatively few communities can be further distorted by some other statistics coupled with a misunderstanding of the composition of the general aviation fleet. According to FAA, there are more than 100,000 general aviation airplanes. With a ratio of 50 general aviation airplanes to 1 certificated carrier aircraft, there is a popular misconception that general aviation is akin to a cloud of aeronautical gnats which darken the skies. This is also wrong.

There are 40,000 airplanes in the general aviation fleet which are strictly business machines. Someone observed sagely that the people who make the decisions in our highly competitive business climate don't take the train or the bus—they fly! The business airplane is known as the "brain wagon" and for good reason.

Nearly 600 business aircraft in our fleet are pure jets, flown by ATR rated pilots. They are private airlines operating on their own schedules.

Almost 3,000 business airplanes are "air carrier types" used by large corporations and flown by ATR rated pilots.

Nearly 25,000 light twin engine airplanes in the general aviation fleet are used by appropriately rated pilots and flown for business purposes. The term light plane is also misunderstood. By legal definition a light plane is any heavier than air machine weighing less than $6\frac{1}{4}$ tons (12,500 lbs.), an arbitrary figure established more than 20 years ago when the DC-3 was the standard air carrier airplane at a gross weight of 35,000 lbs. The DC-3 carried 24 passengers at 165 mph for an extreme range of 1,000 miles. Many light planes outperform the venerable DC-3 with one exception—they carry only from 4 to 15 passengers. Modern light planes fly faster and higher than the DC-3, are better equipped, yet because they weigh less than $6\frac{1}{4}$ tons, are regarded by the unknowledgeable as flimsy toys. As long as this distorted image persists, the problem facing us today cannot be solved. Aircraft such as those described in the above categories range in cost from \$60,000 to \$2.5 million. These are not toys. They are business tools, yet, merely because they are not operated by the certificated airlines, they are popularly defined as "private planes" and the layman assumes that they are Piper Cubs, two place fabric covered training planes. Such aircraft are not worthwhile business investments unless they may be operated on a regular basis; therefore it is necessary not only that the pilot be instrument rated but that the airplanes be equipped with aircraft navigation and communications equipment, known as avionics, costing from \$15,000 to \$50,000 per airplane. These aircraft operate on precisely the same basis as the certificated carriers; instrument flight plans, frequently flown by pilots holding ATR ratings, the same as airline captains.

The question of the competence of private planes operating in the air traffic system is often raised. Here again there is a misunderstanding of terminology. A private airplane is also any airplane not operated by the certificated carriers. The Lockheed Jet Star, Grumman Gulfstream I and II, operated by General Motors and the Ford Motor Co., the Fairchild F27 operated by Champion Spark Plug Co., the DC-9 operated by Playboy, and the myriad DC-3's, Martin 404's, Convairs, and other corporate aircraft are private airplanes. It is time that someone capped the well of misinformation which keeps pumping into the minds of the public the idea that private planes are all Piper Cubs or the equivalent.

Air Taxi/Commuter Airlines.—In the last few years a new segment of aviation has developed to meet the transportation demands of many communities not served by the certificated carriers. This segment is known as air taxi, operating on either a demand basis (like a taxicab on the streets) or on a regular schedule between stated points. This latter development is variously known as scheduled air taxi, commuter airlines, short lines, feeder lines, and more recently as mini-lines. The demand for scheduled air transportation from small com-