

# Qantas Celebrates 30th Anniversary

**SYDNEY, November 15.**—When Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services Ltd. was registered as a public company on November 16, 1920, the name selected by the directors indicated the area in which it proposed that the company's aeroplanes would operate.

Almost two years later it commenced its first scheduled service between Charleville and Cloncurry, in Queensland, with bi-planes carrying two passengers.

From this small beginning grew the Qantas organisation now celebrating its 30th anniversary — an airline whose planes fly over half the world and which now employs nearly 4000 people.

The little town of Winton (Queensland) was the head office of Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services Ltd when registration was effected in November, 1920. The cumbersome name was quickly contracted to the initial letters — Q.A.N.T.A.S. — and, as the years rolled by, to one word — Qantas — the only word in the English language in which the letter "q" is not followed by the letter "u."

Today, Qantas flies five services a week to London. It flies to Hong Kong, via North Borneo; to Japan, via Manila in the Philippines; to Noumea (New Caledonia) and Suva (Piji); to Norfolk Island, Lord Howe Island and the Solomon Islands; to New Guinea and adjacent islands.

Statistics make dry reading, but figures reveal the extraordinary progress the company has made in the

company has made in the past decade. In 1939-40 Qantas carried 8454 passengers and flew 1,673,016 miles. Last year it carried 57,674 passengers and flew 9,220,076 miles.

## GENESIS OF SERVICE

Qantas had its beginning back in 1919, when two former Australian Flying Corps lieutenants, W. Hudson Fysh and P. J. McGinnis, were commissioned by the Federal Government to survey an air route between Longreach and Darwin. This route was to be used by the contestants in the England—Australia air race won by Ross and Keith Smith.

During the survey, carried out chiefly by Model-T Ford, Fysh and McGinnis realised the great opening for an air service in the inland. During their survey they met Fergus McMaster, a wealthy squatter who was later knighted. After assisting to drag a car owned by McMaster from the Cloncurry River, they impressed on him the advantages of air transport as compared with road transport in the inland.

They talked so well that McMaster agreed to discuss with other squatters the possibility of establishing an air service. He interested a sufficient number of associates to find

number of associates to find the capital for a company and Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services Limited was registered on November 16, 1920.

Objectives were, firstly, general air-taxi and joy-riding in Northern Queensland. The first Qantas aircraft was a small Royal Air Force air-cooled model. Later Fysh and McGinnis obtained an Avro with an 100 horse-power water cooled engine. Both machines were bi-planes of World War I vintage and were capable of a cruising speed of about 60 m.p.h.

#### EARLY ACTIVITIES

The early activities of the company were far from profitable and it was not until a subsidy was secured that Qantas was able to establish a regular service. This began on November 2, 1922 and operated between Charleville and Cloncurry, with an overnight stop-over at Longreach. One aircraft made the flight from Charleville to Longreach; the other flew from Longreach to Cloncurry the next day. Each machine carried a pilot and had provision for two passengers. Hudson Fysh was the pilot of the first plane which completed the first flight to Cloncurry.

The first passenger to be carried was an 85-year-old pioneer, Alexander Kennedy, who, in two days, completed a journey which 53 years before had taken him eight months to make. Today, the same flight would occupy about two hours.

In the initial year of its regular services Qantas carried 208 passengers and immediately set about acquiring new aircraft. The first really successful passenger aircraft, the De Havilland 50, was secured in 1924 and carried four passengers in a closed cabin

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It was in this machine that the then Prime Minister (now Viscount Bruce) flew from Winton to Longreach in November, 1924, the first time an Australian Prime Minister had flown within the Commonwealth. Again Hudson Fysh was at the controls.

#### ROUTES EXTENDED

The years between 1924 and 1934 saw great progress. Qantas extended its routes; built a commercial aircraft in its own workshops at Longreach; established the Flying Doctor service; and assisted in carrying the first experimental air mails between Australia and England in 1931.

In 1934 Qantas Empire Airways Ltd was registered, the new company taking over the interests of the old Qantas company. In the following year a regular service to England was in operation, Qantas and Imperial Airways conducting it jointly with land planes. In 1938 flying boats took over. This was the beginning of the era in which passenger comfort became a predominant consideration.

#### VITAL PART IN WAR

Then came the war, during which Qantas played a vital part. Qantas pilots in Qantas planes carried out an immense survey programme throughout the islands to the north and east of Australia and rescued many service personnel and evacuees from isolated points.

When the Japanese took Singapore and interrupted the Australia-England service, Qantas introduced Catalinas and later Liberators and Lancastrians on the world's longest air hop, Perth to Ceylon, a distance of 3513 miles. In all, 824 flights were made across the Indian Ocean, many of them lasting upwards of 28 hours.

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lasting upwards of 26 hours.

Two years after the war ended there was an important change in the Qantas set-up. The Commonwealth Government purchased the shares and the airline became entirely Commonwealth - owned. The management, however, remained unchanged.

Qantas has always been in step with, or a little ahead of, world progress in aviation. As bigger and better planes were produced so Qantas secured them for its services, though the dollar shortage has provided many difficulties.

The company's fleet now includes five Constellations, which are used exclusively on the Sydney-London service. It has five Skymasters, three Lancastrians, more than a dozen DC3's, a dozen De Havilland Dragons, several flying boats and even a Fox Moth which is used on an internal New Guinea service.

In the next two years or so the company hopes to have the jet Comet on the Sydney-London route. Orders have already been placed for them.

All going well, Hudson Fysh will be on the first flight of the Comet to Sydney, not as a pilot, as he was when Qantas put its first regular passenger-carrying plane into the air at Charleville on that November day in 1922, but as chairman and managing director of Qantas Empire Airways Ltd which, under his inspiration and guidance, has become one of the world's foremost international airlines.