

AMELIA EARHART PROJECT

The wide-spread attention given Amelia Earhart's association with Purdue has identified her with the University. A further focusing of interest on this alliance can be of increasing importance from the standpoint of external institutional propaganda and internal inspiration.

Miss Earhart contemplates continuing her pioneer flying. She wishes to attempt setting up further new records. Particularly she is interested in conducting certain flights as laboratory tests involving various scientific aspects of modern aviation - instruments, fuel, constructions, material and methods, radio, navigation and personnel training. Much of this work in preparation, practise [sic] and results, can be coordinated usefully with constructive activities at Purdue.

The plane in which Miss Earhart flew the Atlantic solo is now on permanent exhibition at the Franklin Institute, Philadelphia. The plane used on her Pacific, Mexican, and other records flights, has been transformed into a passenger carrier.

This ship, admirable in its class, is no longer sufficiently speed or modern to hold its place in competition. Particularly Miss Earhart feels that for further over-water flying a two-motor plane is desirable.

A plane is available with the desired requirements. It embraces refinements and improvements whose practical

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demonstration can be important factors in commercial aeronautical progress.

Either a stock model will be purchased or a ship built especially. That can be decided only after careful comparison of the two proposals. For this "custom-built" job the engineering has already been done. It is not an "experimental" ship, but a development of proved design, power plant, etc. Unless the finished product fulfilled pre-determined requirements, delivery would not be taken.

The contemplated ship would have a maximum speed, at average altitudes, in excess of 225 miles an hour. With two pilots and full fuel load, its cruising range exceeds 6000 miles. It would be capable of sustained flight on one motor. I would, of course, have special tanks, instruments, and other devices.

The base cost would be \$30,000. The maximum total cost, including special equipment, preparation, flight outlays, etc., would be \$40,000. That figure would be the guaranteed top.

Miss Earhart has often emphasized her belief that "seventy percent of the success of any aviation or exploration project lies in its preparation". Before attempting any extensive flight she would want to become intimately familiar with the ship under all conditions. She would want to train a co-pilot similarly if one were taken. The co-pilot's primary job would be radio and navigation — a field of intensive training.

Preliminary flights might include the establishment of some new trans-continental and similar records. Possibly a flight to Panama and/or Cuba, etc., detailed experimental work at

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various altitudes, including oxygen flight — the ultimate big flight, to be attempted only if and when everything proves out satisfactorily, to be around-the-world, starting at the Purdue airport and ending at Purdue. The plane could carry the name "Purdue".

A portion of the net financial returns from the flight could be reimbursed to the backers — or, if preferrable [sic], go to some special fund for aviation research at Purdue. At the end of its career of usefulness the plane itself could be installed as a permanent exhibit at Purdue. Meanwhile it would be useable by Miss Earhart — to be maintained and operated at her expense.