

# "Airport Offers New Life"-Higgins

Last Tuesday morning a Lockheed Electra twin engine, ten passenger transport of the Wisconsin Central Airlines landed at the Brainerd-Crow Wing county airport and established the first regularly scheduled airflight service to and from Brainerd.

Mail, passengers and express will be carried on all flights which provide daily round trip service to leading cities in Minnesota and Wisconsin and connecting service to all parts of the nation.

In an interview with a Journal Press reporter last Tuesday, Francis M. Higgins, president of the company said "I feel that regularly scheduled air service here is opening a new way of life to residents of Brainerd and Crow Wing county. It means faster delivery service to merchants, a saving of time on business trips, and a speedier means of communication. I also believe that the air service will extend the area tourist season by at least one month and will be instrumental in establishing a year around tourist business here. Now it will be necessary for the vacationist coming to Brainerd from a long distance to spend only a day or two traveling and will give him more time to spend at his chosen vacation spot."

## BACKGROUND

The Wisconsin Central Airlines is one of the 18 feeder airlines given a franchise by the United States government.

For 20 years there were 18 main airlines operating under a government franchise. In December 1946 the government called for applications to establish 18 feeder airlines. Wisconsin Central was selected one of the 18 from a list of 2,000 applications.

They started operating under their new franchise February 24th, 1948. They are now operating in Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota and have increased their staff of employees from 25 to 165.

## SAFETY OF AIR TRAVEL

Of the thirteen million people who traveled on the 35 scheduled airlines last year there were only 84 fatalities.

Wisconsin Central has flown 15,000 people a million miles and has a perfect safety record.

"Let me give you a little example of your chances of meeting death in a plane accident if you travel by scheduled airline routes," Mr. Higgins said. "If you commuted between here and New York, going to New York each morning and returning each evening, every day in the week, according to statistics it would be one hundred and thirty years before you would die in a plane accident. The death rate on highways is far greater."

"Our pilots must have 3,000

hours in the air. They are able to fly blind and land in any of the airports by use of instrument only.

We will not have our navigation equipment installed at the local airport for 60 days and until that time we will be under visual flight rules which means that there must be a 1,000 ft. ceiling with a one mile view.

The planes we use are twin engine jobs and can be flown with both or either engine. Enough gas is carried to enable the plane to reach any of three airports at anytime and to keep the plane in the air for 4½ hours at a speed of 150 miles an hour."

Hourly weather reports are received by all air bases. The company has under lease 1,100 miles of communication wire.

The planes are maintained by government licensed mechanics. The engines are changed every 600 hours and at the end of 5,000 hours a new engine is installed. Three government inspectors are employed by the company.

## RESERVATIONS

All airplane travel is by reservation Mr. Higgins explained. However reservations may be procured in a matter of minutes by phoning the airport.

At the present time there are four flights, flight 1 leaves Minneapolis at 8:00 and arrives in Brainerd at 9:10 a.m.; Flight 8 leaves Brainerd at 11:06 and arrives in Minneapolis at 12:16; Flight 5 leaves Minneapolis at 2:30 and arrives in Brainerd at 3:40; Flight 12, leaves Brainerd at 5:36 p.m. and arrives in Minneapolis at 6:46 p.m.

The number of flights scheduled for Brainerd will depend on the use Brainerd and Crow Wing county residents make of the service.

"We will schedule as many flights as traffic demands," said Mr. Higgins. "We are here on more or less of a trial basis and whether or not this area continues to have air service will depend on the demand of the residents," Mr. Higgins further stated.

A school for resort owners will be held in Brainerd for one day on April 7.