



Cattle ranching is but one of the many activities supported by Lamb Airways.

## Fish, game, agriculture still basis

### Lamb Airways builds north from The Pas . . .

Part of Canada's struggle for the north is the opening of transportation routes to allow the northward move of civilization. Tom Lamb's "Lamb Airways" has played a leading role in this in Northern Manitoba.

Lamb Airways is more than a charter flying service. This unique organization is active in many phases of development work: tractor freighting, construction, muskrat ranching, and, more recently, the

promotion of cattle ranches. It is operated by Lamb and his sons.

▶ **Lamb's flying covers a wide range of activities:**

- Bringing prospectors in to new territory.
- Carrying trappers in to remote traplines.
- Flying tourists and sportsmen in to unfished lakes.

Although some parts of Northern

Manitoba are now accessible by road in winter, most of the distant lakes, mines and trading posts are still dependent on charter bush flights.

The Department of National Health and Welfare has often called on Lamb to carry out mercy flights. Injured or sick trappers, prospectors and Indians are brought in from outlying parts of the province. On tours made with the Doctor of Indian Services, vaccinations and treatment of minor ailments are carried out.

▶ **Muskrats.** Tom Lamb, founder and owner of the airline, is responsible for having re-established the muskrat trade in vast marshes surrounding The Pas. Leasing a 54,000-acre marsh from the Government, Lamb laid out canals, impounded water with dams and dykes, and protected the breeding stock.

The result: trade is flourishing again. Each year, then, Lamb flies many Indian and half-breeds in to the marshes, returning at a specified date to pick up the trappers and their pelts.

▶ **The Aircraft.** Based at Grace Lake, several miles east of The Pas, Lamb, with five of his sons, is currently flying two Norsemen, two Cessna 170s and a new Cessna 180. These planes are operated on skis



Cessna 170 is one of five aircraft now operated by Lamb.



Tom Lamb



Cree Indians, with trapping gear, await flight in to muskrat marshes which Tom Lamb brought back into production.

## is for bush flying

for six months and on pontoons during the rest of the year.

Lamb's aircraft incorporate many modifications; the result of 20 years' experience in northern bush-flying. Some typical examples:

- Modified axles, making it easier to jack up the skis in winter-time; prevents freezing to ground.
- Special rubber bag which fills the interior of the cabin, for storage of fish and game.
- Heat vents moved from the floor of the aircraft to the wall help prevent food spoilage.
- Plywood tips fitted to the tail-plane instead of the usual fabric covering, for greater strength.

Radiophones connect the flying base at The Pas with trading posts, fishing headquarters and Lamb's tractor transport base at Wabowden.

Newest phase of Lamb's activities is the development of interest in cattle ranching in areas near The Pas. Constantly in touch with local farmers, the pilots are gaining knowledge of agricultural conditions, and experience with various types of grains and grasses.

► **Man-Sized Problems.** Few transportation problems hold up the Lamb Airways, with its vast experience in moving supplies and equip-

ment by tractor, truck, launch, barge or plane.

In 1950 the International Nickel Co. wanted mining equipment hauled out from Churchill 300 miles across the Barrens, west of Hudson Bay, in order to explore a large nickel prospect. Freight and tractors and sleighs were sent by rail north to Churchill then set out across the frozen Barrens.

So far from supplies and shops, endless tractor trouble developed with consequent delays. That year spring came early so that the tractors had to leave their freight and crawl back to the railhead before the ice broke up in the intervening rivers. Lamb promptly arranged an air-lift to complete deliveries.

Trouble followed there, too. Word came that Greg Lamb had crashed on an ice floe when his engine failed. At once his father loaded a plane at The Pas with extra gasoline, enough for the round trip. The snow was gone at The Pas so Lamb took off on pontoons, but was dismayed to find all the lakes near the crash still frozen. All but one, which was 25 miles distant. He landed there and trekked across the Barrens.

By this time the ice had tilted and dumped the aircraft into shallow water. It took 10 days to haul the plane ashore, since the treeless country provided no poles. Once ashore, the plane was given tem-



Lamb Airways base at The Pas.

porary repairs so that Greg, Lamb's eldest son, could pilot it to a repair depot in Prince Albert, Sask.

Tom Lamb returned to his own plane only to find that the wind had battered the pontoons against the rocks, puncturing one of them. He remembered a trick the Indians used in plugging holes in their canoes. He chopped up some ends of rope, mixed them with butter and used that mixture as a patch until he could get the proper repairs done.

In 1952 Lamb Airways was the only bush line to bid on a risky job serving a party of 17 Government geologists in the Northwest Territories. Greg Lamb took on the job of ferrying supplies and gasoline, the latter for two helicopters used by the party. That entire summer he served as an aerial packhorse, moving men and equipment each time the geological camp shifted to a new location. By such means, considerably more exploration can be accomplished in a single season.