

CATALINA ON THE MOVE

AS NOTED ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE, THE COLLINGS FOUNDATION IS ON A ROLL AND HAS JUST ACQUIRED A CATALINA

BY JAMES THOMPSON

Drivers on the main road leaving St. Hubert, Quebec, on 13 June were a bit astounded to see the shape of what looked like a large yellow boat being moved by truck. What they were viewing was the latest acquisition by the Collings Foundation — Consolidated/Canadian Vickers Canso A RCAF 9830 (or PBY Catalina in American!). This vintage amphibian had been on display with the Foundation AeroVision Quebec at St. Hubert since 1994. When delivered to that organization, the aircraft was still airworthy but is not currently flyable.

The plane has quite a history. On 31 July 1943, the Eastern Air Command of the Royal Canadian Air Force took it on strength. It went into service with No. 116 Squadron (Bomber-Recon) in Newfoundland where it carried the code P. Like many of the Canso/Catalinas, it received some form of damage and went to Clark Ruse Aircraft Ltd. for repairs on 17 July 1944 before heading back to Eastern Air Command in September of the same year.

The aircraft was constantly going through upgrades and on 2 December 1944, installation of radar and a nose gun was completed. With the end of the war, the Canadians still had use for the Canso and it became an Mk. 2R search and rescue aircraft. On 6 January 1948, the airframe had only 735.15-hrs flying time when it was delivered to de Havilland Canada for unspecified modifications.

By 29 September 1949 when it arrived at Canadian Car & Foundry for further repairs, it had increased flying time to just 789-hrs. Further repairs were undertaken on 6 May 1950 at No. 6 RD. On 25 August 1950, the Canso was flown to de Havilland Canada for the installation of JATO mounts and controls. On 23 June 1951, it was flown to Aircraft Industries Limited (AIL) for repairs to the nose gear doors and surrounding area. On 5



The unusual sight of a Catalina (Canso) moving down public streets.



Although it will require considerable work, the Canso will be restored back to flying condition.



This is how C-FPQK looked when in active service with Quebec as a water-bomber and transport.

January 1953, it was back at AIL for repairs to an excessive leak in the starboard fuel tank.

By this time, the Canso was flying with No. 103 Rescue Unit at RCAF Station Greenwood, Nova Scotia. On 8 May 1953, it was again flown to No. 6 RD for unspecified repairs that were completed in January 1954. However, on 29 October 1954 it was flown to AIL

for repairs to the electrical system, modifications, and upgrades. On 11 March 1957, it was flown to No. 6 RD for installation of SARAH radio homing equipment and a general inspection.

By April 1959, the Canso was flying with No. 102 (KU) Composite Unit at RCAF Station Trenton. The aircraft went into storage during February 1961 at Dunnville, Ontario, and was offered for sale. It was purchased by the Department of Lands and Forests, Quebec, in 1962 and received the civil registration CF-PQK. One of a fleet of Canso/Catalinas operated by Quebec, the aircraft was modified as a water-bomber but was also used for general transportation duties. Painted a distinctive overall yellow, the plane was originally Tanker 12 then Tanker 712. The Quebec fleet was maintained in immaculate condition and it was sad that the fleet stood down in early 1993 and placed for sale — they could have flown for many years more but were being replaced by Canadair CL-215s.

C-FPQK (Canadian civil registrations had been changed to this form) was gifted to the Foundation AeroVision Quebec at St. Hubert on June 1994 since that is where the aircraft was originally built. However, in early 2017 the aircraft was offered for sale for \$50,000. It seems that the museum had done little to protect it over the years. Realizing the historic nature of the airframe, the Collings Foundation stepped in and the Canso will be transferred to American Aero Services in Florida for restoration back to flying condition.

WI