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New York Airways Collection - "The Issues and Challenges of Air Transportation: A Symposium in the Public Interest...", 1961

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The problem is how to maintain the momentum of public interest and flow of funds without the unwanted stimulus of accidents. How can the lag between remedy and implementation be reduced? I propose this as a question to the symposium. The independence of the FAA should help. Excellent objectives are listed in Project HORIZON. Will they be implemented? We've had plans before. A bi-yearly review of progress and airport needs for air safety may help if it is done by groups of influential public-spirited individuals, such as those who composed the Harding Committee or the Curtis Committee, or members of Projects HORIZON, BEACON, TIGHT-ROPE.

In addition to providing aids to the pilot, there is the problem of training pilots to use them, especially private pilots, and among professional pilots the necessary cockpit management and coordination on an approach to a landing. To some extent this can be handled by regulations covering pilot competence. In transport operations the problem involves relationships among crew members, variation in operating philosophy, and allocation of duties which can best be handled, if not always controlled, by company management rather than by regulation. Training requirements might be reduced by improved instrumentation and more efficient cockpit design.

The problem of accelerating improvement in equipment also applies to the conduct of airport management. Competent managers may lack civic support needed to obtain improvements. Facts should be provided to support the need to improve airport "airworthiness" with minimum delay. To do this it has been suggested that better statistics should be obtained of airport troubles that occur so that the needs can be proven. For example, each airline or operator of transport type aircraft knows how many times its pilots have skidded on a particularly slippery runway. If all operators pooled their statistics for that runway, arguments for prompt corrective action might be more persuasive at the municipal level. Jet transports will soon operate into smaller airports. The management and maintenance of these airports will become a critical problem. Accidents would be reduced by eliminating the incidents that lead to accidents. An incident reporting center might accomplish this in the same way that insurance companies pool their loss experience to rationalize their rates. Civic leaders should be supplied with such facts to support necessary appropriations and implementation before the accident occurs.

TAKE-OFF

Take-off accidents occur at about half the rate of landing accidents so the two combined comprise about 60% of all accidents in transport operations. The length and surface quality of the runway are important factors in the take-off accident, along with take-off aids such as center-line lights, accurate weather observations, efficient reporting of runway conditions. In view of the fiction of friction on many wet runways, an aircraft arresting device is highly desirable at the end of the runway when the pilot has to abort his take-off or lands too far down a runway, or if his brakes are not functioning.

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