

Air Traffic Statistically Safer Than Ever, Growing Increasingly Hazardous

Editor's note: Government and industry leaders agree that U. S. airlines today are faced with increasingly serious safety problems. The following dispatch is the first in a series of United Press reports on these problems and measures being taken to overcome them.

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Washington—(U.P.)—Air travel today is statistically safer than it has ever been before. Potentially, it is growing steadily more hazardous.

The supreme irony of the serious air safety problems now confronting the nation is that they stem largely from past

achievements in making it safer to fly.

Twenty years ago, the scheduled airlines flew 10 million miles for every fatal accident. In 1956, they flew 100 million miles for every fatal accident and carried 30 times more passengers, a 1,000 per cent improvement in safety. That is doubly impressive because it was achieved under the pressure of fantastic expansion.

In that very expansion, however, lies the seed of potential disaster. The air age has grown too fast. The nation is now faced with an aerial traffic jam that

will get worse before it gets better. Planes literally are flying too fast and too often for man to control their movement efficiently.

Antiquated System
Airliners now operate in weather that 10 years ago would have grounded them. In effect, the airlines keep pumping more traffic into an antiquated system which had difficulty handling the traffic of only five years ago.

A modern commercial transport plane is the product of engineering genius, equipped with safety devices that turn what

used to be emergencies into routine situations.

Yet this same plane must fly under a traffic control system 22 years old and into airports that are obsolete and inadequate. It is a statistical fact that a passenger could fly around the world once a week for 118 years before the law of averages, and an accident, caught up with him. You are five times safer aloft in a scheduled airliner than you are driving your own car.

Safety Record Endangered
But aviation experts warn that today's mushrooming air traffic is endangering that safety record.

In 1938, there were 345 commercial airlines flying 284 daily schedules in and out of 183 domestic airports, all under a traffic control system that was set up in 1935.

Today, there are 1,637 commercial airlines flying more than 3,000 daily schedules in and out of 549 airports, under what is basically the same system established in 1935.

The congestion problem would be serious enough if airports and airways had only the 1,600 commercial transports to handle. It reaches staggering proportions when you include the rest of the nation's airway users, 42,000 military planes, and 19,000 aircraft used by business and industry.

Daily Near Misses
One year ago, a special presidential commission warned that scheduled airliners were reporting four near collisions daily. The Airline Pilots Association, representing 11,000 scheduled airline captains and co-pilots, recently told the United Press:

"Despite the shock that revelation caused and all the talk about correcting the situation, our pilots are still reporting an average of four near misses daily, most of them occurring within five miles of airports."

That ALPA warning was buttressed only a few days ago by an official report from the Civil Aeronautics Board. CAB said it received 452 voluntary reports of near collisions in the last four months of 1956. Eighty-three of them were from scheduled airline crews. Ninety per cent of them occurred in "controlled airspace," which means the incidents happened in spite of air traffic control safeguards.

Airports Outmoded
Handmaiden to the traffic problem is the dismal condition of the nation's airports. Most pilots regard even the major terminals as outmoded, poorly designed and in many cases potentially dangerous.

"Airports aren't designed to handle heavy traffic," one veteran American Airlines pilot said. "The ideal airport should have one-way runways just as busy streets are one-way to control heavy automobile traffic."

He explained that under this idea, some runways would be used only for takeoffs and others solely for landings, with the airport terminal located in such a way as to avoid the long delays that occur moving planes between loading areas and operational runways.

The present traffic control system has been known to virtually collapse under the strain of heavy traffic combined with bad weather.

Nationwide Tieup
On June 21, 1956, a day the airliners have dubbed "Black

Thursday," an estimated 100,000 passengers were subjected to lengthy delays or cancellations because bad weather in one large area caused a chain reaction of air traffic delays throughout the entire nation.

Fortunately, there were no crashes. But no one in the industry would like to say how many close calls took place.

A veteran airline captain, commenting on the strain of such bad weather flying in high

density traffic, described his job as "hours of boredom punctuated by moments of sheer terror."

For 20 years, the airlines have been lengthening the hours of boredom and reducing the moments of terror.

But in the past two years, those few moments of terror have been getting alarmingly more frequent.

Tomorrow: The two-way goal in a grim race.

Mayor of Milwaukee Successful Despite Socialist Affiliation

Milwaukee — (U.P.) — Frank E. Zeidler is the most successful Socialist in America. He has been Milwaukee's mayor for 10 years, but he admits it is in spite of his politics, not because of them.

The 44-year-old Zeidler concedes he doesn't get far with Socialist principles against a "capitalistic" city council and a community that resists public ownership. But he hasn't given up.

"Society cannot continue without practicing some of the principles of Socialism," he says. "For example, take the baseball stadium, the home of the Milwaukee Braves. It's owned by

the county because private enterprise failed to meet the need."

Zeidler says his success may be "an accident of time and place." Milwaukee's city elections are non-partisan and it has had a number of Socialist mayors who proved good administrators. One served 24 years.

Zeidler's father, Carl, was elected mayor in 1940. He served only two years, then went into military service and was killed in action. The son was elected in 1947 at age 35.

Distinguished Service
Zeidler is also national chairman of the party. A one-time Sunday school teacher, he is

greatly respected here and won the Junior Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Service Award in government this year.

Martin Schreiber, Republican president of the city council, says Zeidler won election overwhelmingly three times because "he's earnest and honest in decision."

"It's my experience that Zeidler doesn't follow the Socialist line as mayor of Milwaukee," says Schreiber.

Zeidler says he and the council "see eye to eye on many things" and have little difficulty reaching agreement on practical, everyday problems. But if he had his way he would "take a good look" at the transit system and replace slum areas with public housing.

He points out that many cities own much more than Milwaukee which controls only the municipal waterworks. He wants to erase the idea that the word "Socialist" means something bad.

"Propagandists, both Communist and members of monopolistic public enterprise, are to blame for this," he says. "Communists try to adopt the name to cover their real purpose and monopolistic public enterprise uses the word in a nasty tone to keep their interests intact."

American prosperity is one of the main reasons the Socialists do not make headway, he claims, adding that the prosperity is due in considerable part to the two big parties adopting Socialist ideas.

Zeidler admits his chances of winning elections elsewhere are not good.

"I really can't tell you why I win here," he said. "If I could figure it out, I'd move up the political ladder."

Eisenhowers Attend Palm Sunday Services

Washington—(U.P.)—President and Mrs. Eisenhower attended Palm Sunday services at Gettysburg Presbyterian church Sunday before driving back to Washington from their farm home.

The President played 18 holes of golf at Gettysburg on Saturday. The Eisenhowers' son, Maj. John Eisenhower, his wife Barbara, and their four children were week end guests at the farm.

PRINCESS DIES

Lyons, France—(U.P.)—Princess Alexandra, daughter of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, died at a hotel here Sunday night at the age of 70.

Eyes Truck Tax

Other legislative highlights: Trucks: The House Taxation committee continued its hearing into a bill that would enable the state to tax trucks for hire the same way rail, air and water carriers now are taxed.

Battleship Oregon commission: The Senate approved House bill 279 looking toward orderly dissolution of the Battleship Oregon commission.

Highway study: Senate bill 455 was introduced to appropriate \$30,000 for a legislative interim committee study of highway legislation.

Endorsement Given To An Intermediate Penal Institution

Salem —(U.P.)— Dr. Sanford Bates, former director of federal prisons, late Friday gave hearty endorsement to construction of an intermediate penal institution in Oregon.

"There has to be something between a 17-year-old boy and the state prison," Bates reported to the State Board of Control.

Bills appropriating money for the penal institution near Salem are now up for consideration by the state legislature.

Bates, a national prison authority, said there were at least 300 men in the state prison who should not be there—some of them first offenders who had never been to jail before.

In general Bates gave a clean bill of health to MacLaren school for boys at Woodburn which he was assigned to investigate. He said that if a 100-bed dormitory currently requested were built, the Woodburn school should continue to operate effectively through 1958. A 90-bed unit will be ready for occupancy by Sept. 1.

Bates predicted that population at the school would continue to rise from today's 358 to about 439 in 1958 and 513 in

1959. He said there was no reason for a sharper rise and said the state did not need a second training school.

Lisits School Helps
An average stay of 11 months, increased foster care and an expanded camp program should all help the school's population problems, Bates said.

Bates also advocated that the governor assign persons to acquaint local authorities with their responsibilities toward juvenile offenders. He said cities should take some of the load off the state and make an effort to handle the problem locally.

He suggested changes in the intermediate penal institution law so that the institution would not be limited to accepting felons, although he said there was some disagreement among circuit judges on this point. Provision might be made, he said, for restoring civil rights of young offenders to help them get rid of the stigma of a felony conviction.

At MacLaren, Bates said the staff, discipline, morale and organizational set-up were all good. He suggested minor changes in accounting for warehouse supplies in the business office.

Discipline at the school was not harsh, Bates said, but was not too informal, either. He said a better daily report on boys in segregation quarters was needed.

Sweden Holds Two As Russian Spies

Stockholm — (U.P.) — The Defense Ministry announced today that two government workers—naval draftsman and an official of neutral Sweden's atomic energy commission—have been arrested as spies for the Russians.

A spokesman said the secrets the two men are suspected of betraying to the Soviet Embassy concerned "conventional military questions" rather than Sweden's atomic energy program.

The official announcement identified one of the prisoners as Robert F. Damstedt, an assistant secretary of the local AEC. The other was described merely as a "military official."

Informed sources said the second man works in the naval bureau that processes important blueprints—including the plans of new submarines.

The submarine plans were among the secrets handed over to members of the Soviet Embassy staff, these sources said.

Mobilgas Economy Run Starts Today

Los Angeles — (U.P.) — Twenty-four spanking new 1957 automobiles hit the road today on the first lap of the four-day Mobilgas Economy Run, which was turned into a virtual powder puff derby by the admittance for the first time in history of lady drivers.

With a four-person "crew" in each competing model, a 90 per cent cross-section of the American motor car industry rolled out of Los Angeles Sunday night en route to San Francisco, first stop-over on the 1,568-mile journey to Sun Valley, Idaho.

Winners in four classes and the over-all sweepstakes are determined by multiplying the average miles-per-gallon for each car by the weight in tons of the car.

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