

Relatives, Friends Told of Plane Crash

In the Days News

By FRANK JENKINS

Big news: COMMON HORSE SENSE VANQUISHES BIG GOVERNMENT DO - EVERYTHING NONSENSE.

THAT'S the headline. Let's now get into the meat of the story. It began some three years ago when a baby girl was taken into the home of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Combs in Oak Bridge, New Jersey. There appears to have been some question of Mrs. Combs' health at the time, so they delayed adoption proceedings. Time passed. Mrs. Combs' health improved. Two daughters of their own arrived on the scene. Meanwhile, they came to adore the little girl they had taken in. So they moved happily to adopt her.

AT THAT point, the STATE stepped in.

Somewhere along the line, it had been discovered that not only was she a darling but that she had a near-genius I.Q. of 138.

So—The State of New Jersey, through its Board of Child Welfare, said to the foster parents: "NO, you can't have her. You aren't good enough for her. You're just common TV-watching nobodies. She's a GENIUS. She belongs to the world. The STATE must take her and do right by her. She must be placed with a family of superior intellectual and financial resources."

FORTUNATELY, the story got out. There was an uproar from the public. The situation got so hot that the State Board of Child Welfare had to pull in its horns. It put its concession this way:

"We feel that few things are more damaging to a child than to be fought over by its parents in the courts, in the press and over the air waves. We have therefore decided to ALLOW Mr. and Mrs. Combs to adopt her if they wish."

The board had the grace to add: "It is our sincere hope that the Combs, the public and the press will allow the child to grow up in a normal home atmosphere."

This newspaper joins in that hope and hereby pledges, in its small way, that it will have nothing to do with making a holy show of little Alice Marie. That would spoil everything. Let's hope our brothers of the press feel the same way about it.

Miami (UPI) — "Flight 710. Cancelled."

The neat white letters stood out sharply on a black board at the Northwest Orient passenger desk.

For almost an hour this was the only word 15 relatives and friends of passengers on Northwest Flight 710, which had crashed killing everyone aboard, knew of their fate.

Then a tight-lipped 57-year-old man walked through the little crowd.

"The plane is down," he said.

The speaker was Andy Frain of Chicago. He had just telephoned a Miami newspaper and learned that Flight 710, bound from Minneapolis to Miami, had crashed at Tell City, Ind.

Frain's wife, Lillian, 49, was aboard.

"I had a feeling all day something was going to happen," he said. "I know my wife is gone. There's no doubt about it."

Notify Relatives

It was 7:45 p.m. when the airline began calling relatives into a private office to tell them what they already feared.

Mario Gentile, Baltimore, was waiting for his wife, a singer and dancer who used the name Ronnie Lane, 24.

He said the airline told him 710 would be 10 minutes late, then 30, then an hour. Finally, he said, he was told the airplane had turned back because of a storm and the flight was cancelled.

He learned the news from Frain. "What am I going to do?" he moaned.

Dr. and Mrs. J. S. Fleming, Pompano Beach, Fla., were waiting for their daughter, Lois, 19. When Mrs. Fleming heard Frain she put her hands to her head and sobbed. Daughter, Grandchild Killed

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Misch, Highland Park, Ill., learned of the fate of the airliner the same way. Their daughter, Mrs. J. W. Wells, 29, of Englewood, Colo., was aboard with their granddaughter, Karen, 5.

"God take care of them," Mrs. Misch cried.

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Solomon, Libertyville, Ill., visiting in Homestead, Fla., were waiting for a life-long friend, Marion Dufault of Chicago, Ill.

"Is her name on the list?" she asked a reporter.

The reporter said he did not know.

"I told you there was no hope," said her husband, leading her away.

Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Prosser, Boca Raton, Fla., were waiting for their daughter-in-law, Mrs. Webster Drummond Sr., Del Rapids, S. D.

Prosser said, "This was only her third trip on an airplane." "They are dead, they are all dead," his wife said.



AIRPORT SCENE—This scene was typical of the victims were told that a Northwest Airlines plane had crashed, killing all aboard. (UPI Telephoto)

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CRASH VICTIMS—Stewardesses Connie Butler, 24, left, and Barbara Schreiber, 23, were among the five crew members killed Thursday when a Northwest Airlines plane disintegrated in the sky near Tell City, Ind. Both women were from Minneapolis. (UPI Telephoto)

Benson Refuses To Endorse Nixon

Washington (UPI)—Secretary of Agriculture Ezra T. Benson refused Thursday to endorse Vice President Richard M. Nixon for the Republican presidential nomination but said he believed Nixon would make a "good president."

"I have generally not endorsed anyone before the convention," Benson told a news conference. "I have indicated previously that I believe he (Nixon) would make a good president."

Benson flushed and answered testily when asked if Nixon had conferred with him since Jan. 1 on the details of a farm program which Nixon might back if he wins the GOP nomination. Nixon is opposed and no challenger is in sight.

"This whole discussion is getting pretty thin," Benson told his questioners. "I have discussed farm policy with legislative leaders many times. The vice president has been there—I don't know how many times." He did not reply to a direct question as to whether he and Nixon had conferred alone on farm policy. However, he said he had had several contacts with Nixon's office on farm policy.

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