

# The Growing Anti-Lightplane Tide

■ Washington's newest *cause celebre* is one that could easily have been predicted as an aftermath to the two tragic midair collisions that have occurred in the United States this year. Everyone, from President Johnson on down to the lowliest bureaucrat, is talking about air safety. But thus far the powers that be have done little about it, other than to point an accusing finger at general aviation.

The emotion-pitched significance of the entire subject of air safety is such that AOPA and other general aviation interests believe private flying may be faced with one of its darkest hours—unless the industry can effectively unify to overcome the growing demands that general aviation operations be banished from major metropolitan airports; that lightplanes be equipped with all the costly avionic exotica of the air carriers; and that all pilots possess the flying knowledge and proficiencies of the ATR.

Such is the temper of public sentiment that President Johnson's recent request that Congress amend the Department of Transportation budget to authorize \$7,000,000 more for "air safety" was headlined as a "major landmark." Actually, all that the President requested was that \$7,000,000 of FAA's approved budget be taken from Facilities and Equipment authorizations and placed in Operations authorizations to enable the employment of some 900 additional air traffic controllers. The net gain to FAA's safety efficacy, therefore, cannot be expected to be one whit of what it might have been had not the President's Bureau of the Budget denied a \$100,000,000 FAA supplemental budget request for the specific purpose of air safety programs a few days earlier.

At the same time that he sent his budget amendment request to Congress, the President wrote DOT Secretary Alan S. Boyd:

"It is apparent that the growth of commercial and private flying is creating demand for substantial expansion and improvement of the nation's air traffic control system. . . . System improvement will require large additional outlays of Federal funds for investment and operations. Those who will benefit most from such expenditures, the aviation industry and the flying public, should pay their fair share of the costs

of the system needed to handle the increase in air traffic while maintaining a high level of safety. I do not believe the general taxpayer should be asked to shoulder this burden.

"I am, therefore, asking you to develop a long-range comprehensive plan for the facilities, equipment and personnel required to meet these needs. This plan should be accompanied by a proposal for financing the improvements through a system of charges by which the users of the nation's airways bear their fair share of its costs. . . . I am also requesting you to direct the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to conduct a review of current air traffic regulations, flight rules, and standards with a view toward making such changes as he considers necessary to maintain air safety. Should this review indicate that the maintenance of safety requires changes which involve some traffic delays, the Administrator should . . . make such changes."

Even though the President's pronouncements have conferred official blessing, if not financial sustenance, on the cause of air safety, no positive action has been apparent in ameliorating the most basic of immediate needs. Those needs, it is generally agreed, are a more adequate air traffic control system and more concrete to accommodate the unexpectedly rapidly expanding number of aircraft in operation—and the money to fulfill these requirements. But there is less agreement over which of these needs is most vital and how they are to be met.

AOPA believes that the provision of more airports would be a significant step forward in improved air safety, as well as enhancing the economy of more communities. The reason for that belief,

obviously, is that the creation of more landing places would result in fewer aircraft being aimed simultaneously at the needle's-eye approach to a single airport; less milling about in holding patterns waiting for clearance to land.

In a recent talk before the National Association of State Aviation Officials in Oklahoma City, AOPA President J. B. Hartranft, Jr., reiterated the Association's stand that a likely first step toward solution of the dual problems of air safety and airport congestion lies in the creation of a truly national system of airports.

Coupled with AOPA's eight-point air safety recommendations (see October PILOT), "Our first emphasis of expenditures must be upon completion of this national airport plan," Hartranft said. "Not to do so will only multiply the 'airport crisis' we are dealing with on a hand-to-mouth basis at a number of hub airports." And in that too, the air safety problem can be expected to be compounded.

Some Congressional critics of FAA's air safety programs claim that there is already enough in the agency budget to fulfill existing needs if funds were transferred from less pressing areas, such as the supersonic transport program. Others believe that Congress should authorize more money specifically earmarked for air safety projects. Sen. John Stennis of Mississippi in fact, has asked that at least \$50,000,000 of the \$100,000,000 FAA sought in supplemental money be authorized for that purpose. But the latter approach is bound to collide with executive department thinking.

Secretary of Transportation Boyd already has said that fulfillment of the President's air safety directive would

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*Increasing attention directed to air safety programs intensifies the need for all facets of general aviation to educate Governmental leaders and the public at large in order to stem growing weight of 'anti-general-aviationism'*



require new taxes and user fees. With a tentative price tag of some \$6 billion placed on requirements for the system envisioned to improve air safety, he has also made remarks to the effect that general aviation has been getting essentially a "free ride" and that it is about time that segment of aviation began to pay its share. In the same breath, he has suggested that contemplated user charges would not be too injurious to air carriers if they merely tack that additional cost onto the passenger or freight fare.

The obvious result of the user charge concept, therefore, will be that general aviation which, on close analysis will be found to be paying even today for facilities and equipment that exist primarily for the benefit of air carrier operations, will be required to pay even more for "special benefits and services" that it neither wants nor uses. And that is only one side of the coin.

Two of the more vocal recent critics of general aviation in Congress have been loudly demanding the figurative disenfranchisement of general aviation, particularly in metropolitan areas, in the purported interest of air safety. The disturbing point is that their sentiments seem to be shared by a large number of their less strident fellow legislators.

Rep. Benjamin S. Rosenthal of New York called a recent press conference to press for nothing short of outright denial of airspace use to general aviation in major metropolitan locations throughout the country. He pointed for justification to 82 near-misses that he claimed had been recorded in the skies over New York in recent years, ascribing the majority of them to "small planes, scantily equipped and piloted by amateurs."

He also charged that general aviation pilots and manufacturers "have a disproportionate voice" within FAA, and demanded that FAA establish policies to give priority treatment to the airlines as well as further restricting general aviation operations. The commercial value of general aviation is exaggerated, to the detriment of air safety, he charged, without producing evidence to support that claim.

In late September, Rep. Richard L. Ottinger, also of New York, introduced a bill that would enable air traffic controllers to deny the use of an airport or certain segments of airspace to any aircraft or pilot not having certain capabilities.

"The congestion created by these smaller planes is in and of itself a distinct hazard . . . it is absolutely necessary for FAA to see that as many pilots as possible attain and maintain instrument proficiency and to establish this as a minimum standard for pilots flying in and out of congested areas," Rep. Ottinger said. He denied that his crusade was against general aviation, stating:

"I want to make it clear that I do not believe general aviation is the sole threat to air safety nor the only cause of airport and airway congestion. The commercial airlines could contribute

to safety and ease congestion by a more even distribution of their operations. No safety program should be directed only at small private planes." But recommendations he offered belie that. Among them, in addition to restricting general aviation operations in major hub areas, were these:

Expanded areas of positive control, adoption of recertification practices for private pilots, improved near-miss reporting procedures, higher standards for air taxi equipment and pilots; adaptation to civil use of three-dimensional radar, runway barriers, fuel tank protection and drag chutes; requirements for automatic downed aircraft locator beacons and parachutes on all light-planes, the latter to lower them gently in case of engine failure; and installation in private aircraft of airborne recording instruments, ILS and transponders.

When Rep. Ottinger last year aged a vigorous but fruitless campaign to foster the burial of overhead power lines in the interest of natural beautification, AOPA supported his efforts because those power lines also create unnecessary hazards for general aviation. Although AOPA does not disagree with all of its provisions, the unfavorable aspects of Rep. Ottinger's newly introduced bill far outweigh its favorable portions. As Victor J. Kayne, AOPA vice president - Policy and Technical Planning, told members of the Air Traffic Control Association at their annual meeting in St. Paul, Minn., last month:

"Proponents of complete and positive control of all traffic . . . have overlooked a number of significant points. First, some of our most disastrous midair collisions have occurred under controlled conditions. . . . Next, placing all aircraft under positive control means the added requirement of IFR capability for both the pilot and the aircraft, and this is impractical from an economic viewpoint. . . . Further, such proposals would throw a very heavy burden on the air traffic control system and would gather to the Government a tremendous liability and responsibility for the great increase in traffic being handled by the system."

Kayne pointed out that the Government has paid \$16,000,000 to settle claims from aviation accidents involving ATC over the past nine years and 433 suits with claims totaling \$203,000,000 are outstanding. This does not include any actions that might result from the Urbana and Asheville midair collisions.

Along with the vocal thrashing general aviation seems to be receiving in Congress, there also are many staunch supporters. One, Rep. Don Clausen of California, recently was honored as recipient of the University Aviation Association's Alpha Eta Rho award for outstanding contributions to general aviation and aviation education. He also bolstered much support for general aviation in a recent speech on the floor of Congress, outlining the growing crisis caused by the lack of airports and calling for a coordinated national

plan of integrated airport systems (see October PILOT).

But the pressures against general aviation and against the needed expansion of general aviation facilities are continuing to build up. Rep. Ottinger, at a House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee hearing and later in connection with his bill, mentioned earlier, has accused FAA of being derelict in pursuing a meaningful air safety program. He said that a number of safety proposals contained in his bill could be implemented by using supersonic transport program money. "Air safety ought to come first," he said. "The SST ought to be put on the back burner."

A few days later, Secretary Boyd told a New York audience: "Ever since the President announced the go-ahead on that most important [SST] program, there has been a torrent of what Gilbert and Sullivan once called 'platitudes in stained glass attitudes.' From one small but vocal group we hear that the Government has been hornswoggled into bankrolling an industrial monopoly to create an expensive plaything for the jet set." He acknowledged that the Government has a major role in transportation safety, but left no doubt that its pursuit will not be carried on at the expense of the SST.

Boyd has on several occasions, however, left the implication that perhaps it would be wise to more rigidly restrict general aviation operations in major metropolitan areas, as many others have forthrightly demanded. The result has been repeated indication from the management of some airports served by air carriers that they might do just that.

Alarmed over that broadening vein of "anti-general-aviationism," AOPA wrote to Sen. Edward V. Long of Missouri, expressing its concern over such thinking. Sen. Long in turn queried FAA and received assurance that it is "aware of the problems involved and will carefully examine any actions which airport operators may undertake to assure that they do not contravene any of the provisions of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958, the Federal Airport Act, or the provisions of any Grant Agreements issued thereunder."

Behind the publicized postulations of those who are loudly attempting to push general aviation to the wall, however, lies a deeper and more serious campaign that the general aviation community will have to work hard and in concert to overcome. A subtle "hit 'em for me again, John," sort of crusade that has nipped at general aviation's heels for years appears now to be moving more into the open.

One facet of it is the medical picture. The American Medical Association, always quick to look for physiological flaws in virtually every human endeavor, has seized upon the two infamous midair collisions as a vehicle to urge further medical restrictions against flying. In recent publications, AMA declared:

"Mounting congestion of the nation's airways and the potential disaster of



an abrupt physical or mental failure of a pilot call for careful medical screening of flyers and reporting of their condition to the FAA." The article went on to say that AMA's Committee on Aerospace Medicine favors voluntary reporting by attending physicians where illness or potentially disabling conditions in the pilot clearly constitute a hazard to public safety. Certain disqualifying medical conditions may be undiscovered by the aviation medical examiner but may be well-known by the pilot's personal physician, AMA said. The personal physician therefore should be encouraged or required to make that information known to FAA.

Certain airlines too are becoming more overt in their criticism of light-plane operations. An American Airlines publication recently carried several photos showing air carrier aircraft lined up on the ramp, waiting for smaller aircraft to land or take off. A front page headline proclaimed: "Airport Congestion: Waiting For The Small Planes."

An editorial in Airline Management and Marketing magazine recalled a statement made by Boyd last spring: "There is going to be a confrontation between the airlines and general aviation . . . and it will come soon." It went on to suggest that the time for that confrontation might be now.

Commenting on general aviation's contention that restricting airspace for air carrier use would be like building highways merely to accommodate buses, the editorial said:

"The fallacy of that position is just as fundamental as the fallacy of general aviation's unwillingness to work as a group with the airline industry in the search for a solution. There is, in fact, an analogy on the ground for restricting air traffic. Every time a high-speed, limited-access toll highway is built with a minimum speed limit and a prohibition against student drivers, it is designed to serve only high-speed, high volume, long distance traffic. Everything possible is done to discourage the casual driver from getting

in the way. So why not airways and airports restricted to high-speed, high-volume, long-distance air traffic?"

AOPA believes that might be an idea worth entertaining if the airlines were willing to pay the full tab for such facilities. And it can agree in some measure that student pilots should not attempt to use certain high-density airports. But one wonders how traffic police would react to a 10-ton truck or a passenger-laden bus thundering down that highway and up to the toll gate at 60 m.p.h.

Idle wondering will not alleviate the position in which general aviation now finds itself. Bluntly, the 530,000 licensed pilots, private plane owners, and the thousands of others who are concerned with general aviation face a struggle not only to help the industry grow but to see that its comparative freedom and usefulness survive. A little penmanship to help educate the entire Congress in the value and significance of general aviation can't do any harm. □

## Pan Am Agrees To Operate Two New York Airports

General aviation would appear to be a major beneficiary if agreements reached recently between Pan American World Airways and the Port of New York Authority, and Pan Am and the owner of Republic Airport are approved by the Civil Aeronautics Board.

The agreements call for Pan Am to take over operation of Teterboro and Republic Airports, both under 30-year leases, and to do some \$20,000,000 worth of development to improve their adequacy for general aviation use.

Those agreements, PNYA admits, are designed to siphon off general aviation operations from the Authority's John F. Kennedy International, Newark and LaGuardia Airports, where they now account for about one-third of total operations. But the "carrots" that are being offered to entice private flying to Teterboro and Republic reportedly may be attractive enough to turn the trick to everyone's satisfaction. Plans laid out under the agreements already have earned the endorsement and cooperation of the New York area's Aviation Development Council and the major airlines serving Kennedy Airport.

According to Pan Am's chairman and chief executive, Juan T. Trippe, the "carrot" held out to general aviation includes more adequate runways and terminal facilities, helicopter shuttle service, and regularly scheduled limousine service to and from the two general aviation airports.

The Teterboro agreement would become effective upon completion of widening and extension of two runways, scheduled to be finished before the close of 1968. The agreement with Republic, where adequate runways already exist, could take effect immediately upon CAB approval.

Ground transportation to bring Teterboro closer to New York City already has been initiated in anticipation of approval of that agreement. On a daily half-hour schedule (hourly on weekends and holidays), Carey Transportation, Inc., 18-passenger limousines operate between Teterboro Airport and the West Side Airlines Terminal. The trip, which takes slightly less time than the present Newark-West Side Terminal and LaGuardia-East Side Terminal trips, costs \$1.50. Service was begun on Sept. 25 and will continue for six months on a trial basis, then may be extended indefinitely. During the trial period, major airlines using Kennedy have agreed to underwrite the unfavorable difference, if any, between the cost of operating the service and the revenues Carey receives.

"Important as this new service is, it is even more significant for what it symbolizes," said James T. Pyle, director of the Aviation Development Council. "Working closely with the Port Authority, the airlines have served notice of their determination to aid in the development of adequate facilities which will enable general aviation to help relieve congestion at the major New York airports by making better use of alternate facilities."

The Teterboro ground transportation agreement was worked out by PNYA and an *ad hoc* committee representing the airlines. According to Pyle, close cooperation between the airlines and PNYA is expected to continue as they work toward such goals as further improving peripheral airports, improving the environment for general aviation at the major airports through such means as the development of general aviation runways, and improvement of the airspace environment as it relates to gen-

eral aviation. Those cooperative efforts are considered imperative to handle not only forecast but existing traffic.

PNYA's James C. Kellogg, III, said that improvements to Teterboro's two main runways are being carried out by the Port Authority at a cost of about \$4,000,000, which will be reimbursed by Pan Am. These include the lengthening by 2,000 feet and widening of Runway 1-19, now 5,000 feet long; and the extension from 5,000 to 6,000 feet, and widening, of Runway 6-24. The project will include improvements to taxiways, runway lighting and modifications to the existing approach light system to Instrument Runway 6-24. Further developments will improve the convenience of airline service to Bergen County without bringing large airliners into the airport, he added. The only airline operations to be permitted are helicopters, such as the shuttle service to Manhattan and Kennedy that was inaugurated March 1, 1967.

Pan Am officials said the redeveloped Teterboro Airport is expected to provide employment opportunities for far more than the 1,000 people now working there and will add an estimated \$11,000,000 a year to the local economy.

The Republic Airport 30-year agreement is subject to termination if the property is sold by its owner, Joseph Mailman, but improvements already are planned there too. These would include a new passenger terminal, an improved control tower and modern air navigation facilities.

To encourage use of the new airports by general aviation aircraft, Pan Am expects to assist in the further development of high-speed and economical air-taxi shuttles between both airports and various points in Manhattan. □