

AVIATION SAFETY

MONDAY, JULY 24, 1967

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERSTATE AND FOREIGN COMMERCE,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met at 10 a.m., pursuant to notice, in room 2123, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Harley O. Staggers (chairman) presiding.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

This morning we are going to receive testimony on the subject of aviation safety. This certainly is one of the most important matters within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce. I don't believe that a day goes by without some contact being made with me concerning one facet or another of aviation safety.

Before we hear from our first witness, I would like to clarify a few items which have been somewhat distorted and confused in reports on aviation safety and on the unfortunate and most regrettable midair collision on July 19 near Asheville, N.C.

We are not here to investigate nor to attempt to determine the probable cause of that accident. Our interest is legislative in purpose. We want to determine if existing laws are being executed in full accordance with their intent. Beyond that—and I am sure that the witnesses who appear before us today are well aware of this—we are ready to consider any recommendations for legislation which can further enhance aviation safety.

I want to make it clear to all concerned that the committee is neither equipped nor qualified to search out and identify the detailed facts and causes of specific accidents. I am sure that all of us are interested in obtaining as much information as we can on the accident which occurred in North Carolina last week, but we must be sure not to put the witnesses in a position of speculating or theorizing about this accident.

The investigation of this crash is still in its early stages, and here I would like to say something about the investigative processes which are followed in every case where a fatality occurs.

The Bureau of Aviation Safety under the National Transportation Safety Board is staffed by experts who respond to a notification of an accident by immediately proceeding to the scene. Under an investigator in charge they are organized into a number of groups, each of which has a specific task.

The groups are named in an explanatory manner such as air worthiness, structures, powerplants, operations, witnesses, weather, human factors, and air traffic control.