

Subsequent to such public hearing, the Board analyzes the record and other information known to it and issues a formal report as to the probable cause of the accident.

Of course, as you know, the entire chain of process is conducted entirely in the open, and as rapidly as facts are identified as uncontroversial and relevant, beginning at the accident site, they are immediately made known to the interested parties to the investigation and are at the same time released to the news media and the public. In fact, a major part of the constructive results which flow from accident investigations are the immediate putting to use for corrective purposes of all the information developed during the preliminary stages of the investigation or in the public hearing.

The Board appreciates and understands the continuing interest you and your Committee have with respect to the performance of the accident investigative functions by our Board. Please feel free to call on us at any time for information or report either as to our process generally, or as to the handling of any particular case.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH J. O'CONNELL, Jr.,
Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Now we will be pleased to hear from Chairman Joseph J. O'Connell, Jr., who I understand is accompanied by Bobbie R. Allen, Director of the Bureau of Aviation Safety. Also present is Administrator William F. McKee, and his Deputy in the Federal Aviation Administration, David D. Thomas.

Gentlemen, you may proceed.

First, however, I would like to say that this is not a witch hunt. We are not trying to pin the blame on anyone. We are interested in the procedures which are followed, and we want to determine if there is anything that the Congress can do to assure ourselves and the people of this country that everything is being done to promote aviation safety.

Mr. DEVINE. Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Devine.

Mr. DEVINE. I think it is excellent that you have made the statement that you have and pointed out to the public and the press, particularly, that this is not an investigation by the Congress of the North Carolina crash. This situation merely triggered the problems of air safety that are of concern to all of us.

I know that many of us receive a great deal of mail from the public concerning the public interest, and situations arising out of air safety. I know the general aviation community is upset thinking that they are being blamed every time there is a midair collision. Other people suggest that extra airports should be made available.

I think, however, that the situation that did develop in North Carolina, and which did indeed cause this hearing to be set, points up the need that we should have rather extensive public hearings perhaps by the Subcommittee on Transportation and Aeronautics of this committee.

The CHAIRMAN. I might say to the gentleman that this will be done if it is warranted. That is the reason we are having these public hearings this morning, to determine whether we are remiss in what we should be doing as the Congress and as representatives of the people, and what the experts' ideas and thoughts are as to what can be done to further promote air safety.

I am sure they will do their very best to do just that.