

words, he just saw something go by and took no action or didn't see it in time.

Of these 500 or 600 reported a year, there are very few that fall in the critical category. One of the reasons they may or may not, and we don't feel too good about our own statistics because we rarely get the other pilot's view, it is an unknown aircraft and we can't find him, so we have one pilot's view. Sometimes we have two, as in the case of the Navion-American flight. In the case of the Western and the two Navy aircraft, we don't know, so we just classify that as either potential or critical, because we don't know.

Mr. BROTZMAN. Are most of these near-misses occurring in airports where they do not have radar?

Mr. THOMAS. No, sir. There are two reasons for that. One is a large number of them occur en route where it is not a terminal situation at all. In the terminal situation where we have radar, we have the most traffic and, therefore, the most potential. Where we don't have radar we have the least potential.

We have analyzed them. Quite often you will find that they are in the terminal area with visibility of more than 5 miles. There will be a slight preponderance either departing or taking off and not just in the traffic pattern. So we find almost an equal number of them en route, and it is very random.

Mr. BROTZMAN. I believe you mentioned a moment ago that there seems to be some fear of reporting a near-miss, because of threatened punitive action. Is this the company that penalizes the pilot for something he has done, or is it the FAA?

Mr. THOMAS. The penalty would come from us. Of course, as I say, we are now trying to arrange to get the information without any penalty. But a pilot reports a near-miss and we examine it.

The way the fear originated was that we examined and found out that he was at the wrong altitude or hadn't followed his instructions or something else, some other violation. We then took some action. This is reputed to have dried up the near-misses.

However, I notice that the critical ones that are reported continue about the same. We are trying to encourage the pilots to give us all the information they can. Even if we find them in the wrong, we will not impose a penalty because we want to know the proper corrective action.

Mr. BROTZMAN. It would seem for us to understand this problem fully, we have to be able to nail these statistics down more accurately. I am just relying on a newspaper account that I read this morning, stating that in 1966 there were 463 near-misses reported, but that the average since 1960 has been 532.

This would indicate, if these figures are even in the ballpark, that either the situation is getting better, which I doubt, or that there are, in fact, a lot of near-misses that are not reported.

Mr. THOMAS. Since the traffic is growing rapidly, the potential for near-misses would be increasing. The actual number reported is going down somewhat. I would suspect the situation is not improving, as the reports would indicate.

Mr. BROTZMAN. I thank the chairman.