

In view of the real crisis that we are confronting, it would require action now. I think you have been derelict in your duties in pursuing these matters more diligently.

General McKEE. I do not accept your language that I have been derelict. Neither I nor my other people in FAA have been derelict in their duties. I don't know of any 43,000 people in the United States who work around the clock and work harder than the people in FAA. And in defense of those people, and you can give me all the hell you want to personally but I stand up for those people, every speck of the way. We have got 14,000 controllers working in this control work and working in these centers, and I am proud of them. There are not a finer bunch of men in this country, and if everybody in this country did the job those people are doing, this country would be a hell of a lot better off, and that is my speech, Mr. Ottinger, and I will stand by it.

Mr. OTTINGER. Well, I'd certainly agree that your controllers are doing an outstanding job under the most trying circumstances. But that misses the point, which concerns the diligence of your agency in pursuing new safety devices and requiring new safety procedures. Here, the editors of Electronics magazine certainly don't agree with you. They say:

Of all the thousands of Government agencies, it would seem almost impossible to rate one as the worst, yet technical men who have studied the air traffic control problems are ready to give that malodorous distinction to the FAA. The agency born to perform great feats of technical innovation has turned out to be weak, ineffectual, unimaginative, and apathetic. The threat of midair collision hanging over the United States when the FAA was formed is still with us, only worse than ever. And the FAA is as far from coping with this threat as it was on the day it was founded.

That certainly isn't a very glowing approval.

General McKEE. I would like to answer that, too.

The CHAIRMAN. Just a moment. I will allow the gentleman to answer that, then that will be all. You may go ahead and answer it.

General McKEE. All I wanted to say is that if I just read the criticisms directed at me and FAA, I would do nothing else, and the FAA wouldn't. We would not even have an air traffic control system. I consider that an irresponsible article, and the aviation community will back me up 100 percent. I am surprised you even bring it up.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Blanton.

Mr. BLANTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General McKEE, I am not going to try to put you on the spot, because I realize that the administration has other things in mind, but I would like to ask you this one question. Do you think, if the Anacostia strip was made available to private aircraft, it would ease some of the congestion at National Airport?

General McKEE. Yes, we said this last summer. Obviously, any airplane, or number of airplanes, that you take out of a particular airport serve to relieve the congestion.

Mr. BLANTON. Now, I am leaving out the directive that you—you would not have to direct them over there. They would willingly use it, provided it was available.

General McKEE. I think that is true, a lot of them would, and a lot of them would not.