

Airlines plane and a Trans World Airline jet earlier this month or the FAA's 'that's the way the ball bounces attitude.'

"After the last major air collision of 1960, the FAA tried to improve its control system. It failed, but at least the Agency was recognizing its responsibility. After this month's collision, the FAA figuratively shrugged its shoulders and said it had a system, to be installed by 1970, that might prevent such accidents. Then it went on to less controversial matters . . ."

Concluded the editorial: "A technological society in which two space capsules keep a rendezvous somewhere in the immeasurable universe should have no problem getting safe, efficient, comfortable air transportation. But first a major change in attitude and direction is required. The FAA has to do a lot more than count the bodies after an accident."

Turnover is running high at Air Traffic Control facilities, so that the burden upon experienced personnel gets heavier. Letters from sources of NAGE locals complain of over-work, training problems and low morale at ATC centers. A typical letter recently received from an N.A.G.E. Local office at an eastern facility said, in part:

During the year 1966, we have had a considerable turnover of personnel . . . Look at the workload here at our facility. During the year, we had approximately 290,000 total flight services performed. During 1966, we had an abundance of sick leave. This means the remaining specialists had to carry the workload. This was done by the morale-breaking procedure of changing watches, being called in earlier, and no spot leave being granted. From January to May, 1966, we had a complement of 24 personnel, counting the chief. From June to December, we had a complement of 22. This meant 290,000 flight services were divided by 23 personnel, and if my math serves correctly, 23 into 290,000 equals approximately 12,750 flight services per man, that is including the supervisor.

"Are the supervisors to be classified as 'working supervisors' or supervisors? As of the start of 1966, they were supervisors, thus the 290,000 should be divided among the journeymen and assistant journeymen. Using just 19, combined journeymen and assistants, the total flight services comes to approximately 15,300 per man for 1966. In using 18 journeymen and assistants, which we did for a great part of the year, the flight services per man increased considerably.

"More qualified personnel (must be) assigned, so we can have a half-decent watch schedule and be able to have spot leave or annual leave. Morale is at its lowest point and unless we can come up with some solution, we are going to have to sacrifice safety for economy. . . . Why are personnel assigned here who require study and training, when we cannot spare the manpower to help them?"

Manpower vacancies have reached a serious point at several facilities (by FAA's own admission) in the Washington Area (among others). A notice issued by the FAA Washington office, Falls Church, Virginia, January 25, 1967, said, "Manpower vacancies among ATCS employees have reached a critical stage in several facilities . . . These vacancies cannot be filled solely by promotion actions within the specified facilities, because only a limited number of personnel are eligible for promotion. Limited vacancies at GS-10 and average grade ceilings have contributed in part to restricting some promotions in the past."

From another NAGE ATCS Local came this recent note: "As it stands now, we will have three supervisors for seven journeymen." In large red letters, the letter concludes: "We're understaffed. Especially with Summer coming on. Help!"

I could read excerpts from many other letters we have received, Mr. Chairman, unsolicited letters from "out in the field," telling of conditions that should not exist in any agency of this government, not to mention one with such vital responsibilities.

These reflections of FAA field functions, I will admit, Mr. Chairman, strain one's credulity in the light of the Federal Aviation Agency's persistent preoccupation with cost cutting. As recently as February 1966, an elaborate booklet was issued entitled, "Federal Aviation Agency Cost Reduction." It described the "Cost Reduction Program" as the umbrella covering all of FAA's diverse economy programs . . . We contend, Mr. Chairman, that what we need under such a program are more parachutes instead of umbrellas.

This booklet, whose cost of preparation and publication would have paid for a one or two badly needed added traffic controllers, envisioned "specific cost