

budgetary/manpower limitations . . ." Here was a candid admission that the Federal Aviation Agency would take necessary flight safety measures only to a certain financial point, an arbitrary budgetary restriction permitting of just so much safety and no more.

An FAA Eastern Region Air Traffic Division Bulletin (February 3, 1966) emphasized the importance of exercising "good judgment" in control procedures, and rightfully so. And the Bulletin also cautioned: "Don't get the idea that faulty judgment is limited to controllers. Radar handoff men, coordinators and supervisors can all be equally guilty of poor judgment . . ." It added that with the coming of radar in ATC and the reduction in separation standards, accurate action is more vital than ever. The notice likewise reminded that correct control actions have become even more critical as speeds of aircraft increase, with consequent great reduction in available "thinking time."

Training as well as manpower and equipment deficiencies are apparent within the Federal Aviation Agency. According to an ATS System Error/Near Mid-Air Collision Study, "the present day training efforts are not always oriented to system needs." An ATD official said in a commentary on this study: "To proceed one step further, we believe the enroute facility commonly experiences difficulty in teaching all of its people even though a particular training program is oriented to a system need. It, therefore, becomes reasonable to associate this condition with the system error potential."

Continued the official in his review: "When one reflects on the air traffic controller and his work environment, there appears ample evidence of a highly skilled group of people possessing the distinguishing qualities of conceptual ability, ability to remain stable under pressure and, probably more essential, ability to make sound decisions often under harassing circumstances when but little opportunity exists for pre-planning. He almost literally holds the life and safety of hundreds of people in his hand at any given moment. Against this background, he must retain a massive amount of information as well as the necessary control techniques to cope with any situation. He is confronted with a considerable and continuing challenge and certainly in this surrounding 'peak' form must be displayed at all times.

"We feel . . . that the controller is not given a sufficient amount of time to do all the reading and studying necessary to sustain him at knowledge/skill level expected of him by the system. Similarly, this lack of time affects the amount of training which can be administered to him—thus increasing his chance for error.

"We also feel that the prime reason for this situation rests in the area of MANPOWER ALLOWANCES, based primarily on operation needs and which in effect relegate the training activity to a 'manpower permitting' basis. This 'catch-as-catch-can' method of administering a training program in a level III facility makes it exceedingly difficult to plan, schedule, and regulate the function. Consequently, the training effort cannot commonly be directed to the area of greatest need.

"We recommend that a minimum controller training need be identified at the national level, expressed in terms of 'hours', and *established as a requirement*—and that the proper resources in the form of manpower be made available to insure completion of this recognized need. Approaching our problem in this manner also involves funding, but seems a necessary measure if we are to retain the work force at the high skilled/knowledge level expected of them, thereby minimizing the possibility of control errors arising out of this source area . . ."

If the Federal Aviation Agency has suffered from a chronic lack of funds, it has also unfortunately handicapped itself by too much of something else; too many administrative decisions and policies of the wrong kind, according to abundant evidence. Here, the over-worked, under-paid, dedicated people who keep the FAA going at the operational level can count among their blessings the oceans of red tape which serve to blunt all directives of the bureaucracy, good or bad.

To be sure, the National Association of Government Employees has a militant interest in the function and the health of the Federal Aviation Agency. As the largest independent union for government employees, the NAGE has a large membership among employees of the FAA. But we should like to draw to the attention of this Honorable Committee of the United States Congress, well-based independent opinions—as we sincerely believe them to be—and facts, all bearing in one way or another upon the administrative effectiveness of the FAA. In addition to a financial anemia, the FAA, we respectfully suggest, has been afflicted from time to time with such other ills as myopia, dyspepsia, introversion and dual personality.