

Respond the Kansas City electronics technicians, "How long can it be declared that we have a productivity increase of three percent and thereby cut the number of employees by the same amount? We would think that after a facility has been established for a period of two to three years, there would be no further productivity increase there. Furthermore, as the equipment gets older, it requires more maintenance. So, even though we might have a productivity increase, we very well might need more men rather than to decrease the staffing by the same amount as the productivity increase."

Another problem is the phase-out of electronics equipment which air-traffic employees believe they still need to fulfill their mission.

Report workers at the Airways Facilities Branch, Trinidad, Colo., "Several weeks ago, our subsector chief and our local FSS (Flight Service Station) chief were notified that the region's plant and structures section has decided to discontinue and remove all standby emergency generators from Flight Service Stations 'in the interest of economy.'

"It will probably cost several thousand dollars to remove and rewire each facility. It will not do away with any technicians since our work load will be affected very little by removing them. About all that will be saved will be the few gallons of gas and oil per month it takes to keep the unit in good operating condition.

"However, there is a great possibility of air tragedy occurring due to emergency power not being available.

"For example, on April 22, our FSS experienced a 2½-hour power failure. If the emergency power plant had not been available, the communicators would not have had any communications with the aircraft in the area. While Trinidad is not extremely busy, there were three inbound and one outbound during this period. Loss of communications could have resulted in a collision.

"Also, our station is equipped with Direction Finder equipment to render assistance to pilots who become lost or disorientated during the freak weather conditions which occur in our area regularly. On April 29, one communicator had three such problems.

"It is during these unusual weather conditions that air traffic needs the most assistance; it is also during these times that we experience most of our commercial power failures. So, you can see what problems we are going to have in air safety if management gets their way and removes our standby emergency power plant."

According to employees at New York, more potential trouble threatens because of another instance of equipment phase-out. They report, "FAA has all its eggs in basket with the only capable radar at Kennedy Airport.

"In the event of a breakdown of the Kennedy radar site, there would not be enough air coverage with the backup Palermo and Benton radar systems.

"The FAA discontinued service of the Montauk radar site which would have served as an excellent backup of the Kennedy radar site."

A final point on which subcommittee members requested further specifics was the subject of unreported "incidents" taking place, instances in which aircraft pass each other at distances less than the FAA's safety limits.

Because of the very fact that such incidents go unreported, it is extremely difficult to assign figures to the numbers of times they occur. However, in a survey of N.A.G.E. members, we found that, by the air traffic controllers' own estimates, they happen with alarming frequency.

Controllers at the New York Air Route Traffic Control Center reported that there is at least one "conflict," sometimes as many as five, on an average day at the facility. Most of these, they said, go unreported.

Mr. FRIEDEL. Our next witness will be Mr. Clifford P. Burton, executive director of the Air Traffic Control Association.

STATEMENT OF CLIFFORD P. BURTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL ASSOCIATION; ACCOMPANIED BY JAMES HILL, GENERAL COUNSEL

Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

If you wish, I can summarize my statement; however it is only some six pages long, so I am at your disposal, Mr. Chairman.