

This is simply a limitation in the system. The controllers have gone as far as they can without running a substantial risk of collisions in order to even go this far.

Even where the collisions do occur, they are not the fault of controllers; it is because they lack the proper equipment and because they are too busy to afford advice to airplanes that are on the way to their way of making a mistake.

Let me cite an example. Some time ago Eastern Air Lines in a Constellation collided with a TWA—I believe it was a 707 or a 720—over New York or upstate Connecticut.

It appears from the investigation that one of the airplanes was off altitude by 1,000 feet.

If the printout information which is available now—whether or not it was then, I do not say—if it had been in operation the controller would have instantly noticed two targets converging which he assumed had altitude separation, both reporting the same altitude, advised one of the pilots or both of them, and that accident would not have occurred.

If he had not been as busy as he was at the moment and had had the time to constantly recheck the pilots, because when he sees two blips converging he has no way of knowing whether there is any separation there from what he can see.

He relies wholly on the pilot. If he had time to recheck that it was on collision course and doublecheck the altitude, that accident would not have occurred.

We do not know how many chalked up to pilot error could be avoided if the air traffic control system was adequate to meet its needs.

If it is adequate it is just barely adequate in some places. It will not be adequate tomorrow. The anticipated sophistication of equipment will not be accommodated by our present facilities.

We have a saying in flying that when it comes to checking out pilots "you are either ahead of an airplane when you fly it or you are behind it."

There is no such thing as being even with the airplane. I think the same thing is true of air traffic control. Unless they are able to stay ahead of what they are doing, to be constantly anticipating every move required of an aircraft or another, then they are behind the system because they can never be even with it.

Controllers now I might say, who are required to work overtime are unenthused about doing so because they are paid less for their overtime than they are paid for their normal working hours.

Many controllers are on tranquilizers because of the stress of the job. Some of them have reported in and have been temporarily relieved of duty until their nerves have been repaired.

Because of shortages, controllers sometimes sit 3, 4, and 6 hours without a break at a position continually handing off and receiving aircraft and maintaining overloaded scopes.

All of this, we think, is destined for some difficulty. There is a duty on the part of these gentlemen before that becomes imminent to bring it to the attention of those who can do something about it.

In my judgment, after evaluating the problem, after talking to the airlines, with general aviation, with probably more controllers than any other human being has visited in the last 3 months, with the FAA,