

Our record shows our concern for safety and our plea today is only that the platitude be forsaken and that the order of priority be dictated by reality.

Reality dictates that the capacity of the air transportation system be increased. We are all aware of the existing volume of air traffic and of predictions as to the volume that the public requirement will generate in the short-term future.

Yet, no recent Federal proposal offers any hope or promise of significant system capacity increase. Several major Federal programs, such as the semiautomated air traffic control system, offers probable benefit in terms of safety. We would not wish to belittle such programs, but rather to place them in proper perspective.

A series of four consecutive recent Federal actions have all been highly restrictive to the capacity of the system. Briefly, they are:

1. The 250-knot speed limit;
2. The special VFR rule;
3. The mandatory IFR proposal; and
4. The terminal airspace proposal.

Each of these proposals has at least some partial justification on the basis that it would offer a probable improvement in safety. Some, but not all, of this claim of improved safety must rely on the obvious fact that less traffic means greater safety on a direct ratio to the ultimate point where total safety may be equated with zero air traffic.

We would even agree that certain portions of these four consecutive, most recent Federal proposals are necessary. But we would only so agree following our reluctant observation that there has been no Federal proposal that would offer significant capacity increase, nor, despite our aggressive efforts, have we been able to learn of any such planned or impending program.

In a climate where there will be no significant capacity increase, artificial restrictions to fulfillment of the public demand for air transportation are probably inevitable.

This absence of program to increase capacity exists despite specific recommendations from NBAA and from other aviation organizations and interests. Some major portions of these recommendations have been repeated over a 10-year period. Nearly all of the equipment and the technology have been available for a similar period. The problem is that, as the Federal has preempted in the area of air traffic control, further progress by the industry cannot be made without cooperative Federal action.

By this we mean that aircraft operators will not install costly improvement in the airborne display of navigational data unless there are procedures enabling the ATC controller to utilize such airborne capability and precision. Similarly, airports cannot build runways to separate slow and fast traffic unless Federal criteria are developed to show how the runways must be placed before ATC controllers may clear aircraft to them on an independent and nonconflicting basis.

It is our belief that the central theme of the means to increase system capacity can be simply defined if we strip away the maze of supporting technical detail.

In the early days of air traffic control, the pilot had an elementary display of navigational data that would permit him to fly only directly