

the authority to suspend a charter rate if it felt that rates were unreasonable.

Because of the strong competition that exists, both within the United States among the various carriers interested in the charter market as well as in the international area between both scheduled U.S. carriers and the supplemental air carriers and the various foreign air carriers, there is a good deal of competition. This tends to cause an air carrier not to charge exorbitant rates because of the competitive implications and what the traffic will bear.

Theoretically, it is possible to have a charter rate war that could be disastrous, but in recent years we have not had any serious problem in terms of either rate wars or any accusations of unreasonable rates.

Quite a few years ago, the Board had considerable occasion to interfere with the charter rates, but in recent years our activity is essentially confined to military charter rates for which there is a separate program.

Mr. THOMPSON. May I follow with one more question dealing with the charter operators. Are they required to meet the same general safety standards as are the certificated carriers so far as their equipment is concerned?

Mr. KIEFER. We rely on the Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration to administer those parts of the law applicable to safety. The safety function from—

Mr. THOMPSON. The NTSB now has complete investigating authority?

Mr. KIEFER. That is correct.

Mr. THOMPSON. Should there be any question as to whether they are complying with the regulations for safety, an action would have to be brought by the CAB, would it not, charging them with failure to comply?

Mr. KIEFER. If the purpose of the action was to remove or terminate their authority—might I ask our General Counsel, Mr. Goldman, to reply to your question, Mr. Thompson?

Mr. THOMPSON. Yes.

Mr. GOLDMAN. In the field of safety violations, normally the charges would be brought by the Federal Aviation Administration and ultimately determined by the National Transportation Safety Board.

The Civil Aeronautics Board does have a certain amount of responsibility with regard to the economic viability of the supplemental carriers to insure that they remain in a sufficiently healthy state so that economics will not have a bearing on poor safety records. But the direct safety responsibility in terms of compliance is not with the Board.

Mr. THOMPSON. May I ask you another question—I was a little late, I apologize for being delayed—but what are the total number of employees in the CAB? You may have given this in your initial statement.

Mr. CROOKER. The authorized position level in fiscal 1968 is 669.

Mr. THOMPSON. You have 669 employees?

Mr. CROOKER. The actual average employment is 650.

Mr. THOMPSON. How many offices do you have? Do you operate only from Washington?

Mr. CROOKER. There are 30 persons who are outside Washington. All of these are field auditors, 11 in New York City, 13 in San Francisco, and six in Miami, Fla. Actually, we do not have an office in Miami.