

Mr. CROOKER. I don't think we have solved all the problems, but at least we are working on it.

Mrs. HECKLER. How deeply has your agency become involved in the SST program?

Mr. CROOKER. I don't think we have become involved in the SST program very deeply.

Of course, in our economic forecasts, gazing in the crystal ball to some extent, we wonder what the impact will be on travel, either domestically or across the oceans.

The SST will probably have as its initial logical routes transatlantic and transpacific service, and it is of interest to us to try to forecast what the traffic may be.

But so far as other problems are concerned, safety or aircraft noise, I don't know that we have yet had a major role in coping with those problems that the SST may raise.

Mrs. HECKLER. Have you in your economic forecasts determined the profitability of the SST; whether or not it will be profitable for regulated airlines or whether they will break even, how long it will take them to make a profit and so forth?

Mr. CROOKER. I am sure that the Bureau of Economics is studying all this. I would suppose the factors are going to be how many hours per day can the SST be kept in the air, will there be unreasonable delays in takeoffs or as you approach the destination point in circling and awaiting a time for landing. It will be a costly piece of equipment to leave idle or leave circling. I suppose our economists are trying to consider all these factors and determine what the economics will be. This, in turn, may affect what the rates will be when we have to face up to those rate problems in 1970 or so.

Mrs. HECKLER. The statements which have been made show the cost of the SST to be truly astronomical.

The cost of the pilot alone is phenomenal. I understand it is not impossible for a pilot flying the SST to earn something like \$100,000 a year. Wouldn't it be wise to assess some of these problems in advance so that we can determine whether or not this is a project that should go forward on an economic basis?

Mr. CROOKER. Mrs. Heckler, from what little I know about the matter, I assume that the Department of Defense may be giving consideration to the SST for purposes other than mere civil air transportation.

So far as civilian air travel is concerned, I don't know what amounts will be paid to employees or what the lines that own these new pieces of flight equipment will find as to operating costs. I would imagine that with reasonably capable carrier management in the private sector of the economy they will be doing their best to make civil air transportation a profitable thing.

I don't see how they can price themselves out of the market rate-wise even if they should get all necessary governmental approvals in order to save 2 hours between New York and London. So I don't know whether a pilot will be making \$100,000, but it seems to me they might rewrite the formula so he will be making somewhat less.

Mrs. HECKLER. It is encouraging, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Mr. FASCELL (presiding). What is the status of your fiscal 1970 budget?