AAAE OFFICIAL CRITICIZES CAA

Severe criticism of the present administration of the Civil Aeronautics Act was made by Walter E. Betsworth, executive secretary of the American Association of Airport Executives, as the Senate Commerce Committee continued hearings this week on the McCarran omnibus aviation bill (S. 2647). Betsworth told the Committee that AAAE generally supports the pending legislation and endorses the provision for setting up a new, single, seven-man administrative agency.

The witness said it should be expected that a new agency would bring "a return to a high moral sense of obligation that would assure the faithful discharge of commitments made in the name of the Government." The major fault lies in the Commerce Department, which in the last five years has been slowly absorbing the duties and functions of CAA and CAB, Betsworth declared. For example, he said, "the Civil Aeronautics Administrator has become a mere figure head; political appointees unversed in aeronautical matters have taken over the duties and the functions of CAA."

Under the present arrangement, Betsworth said, CAA employes' morale is "at rockbottom." When asked by Senator Andrew F. Schoeppel (R., Kan.) what caused this, he answered that "a turnover of five administrators in seven years has precluded the completion of any of the plans that have been started. One administrator would start a reorganization which he might or might not have completed before he left when his successor would want to reshuffle things again his way and so on to date." The AAAE supports the McCarran bill and its purposes, Betsworth said, "because we believe it will give a continuity of planning and a continuity of accomplishment to the entire civil aviation industry that we have not as yet been able to achieve."

Opposition to the McCarran legislation was expressed by the Air Transport Association and the Aircraft Industries Association. DeWitt C. Ramsey, AIA president, said "the member companies are opposed to any major reorganization of the civil aeronautics structure, and urge that any improvements found necessary in specific provisions of the 1938 Act be incorporated in it through amendment."

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BOSTON FIRM DEMONSTRATES NEW TYPE RADAR SYSTEM

A new airport precision approach radar which promises to serve the dual purpose of a low-cost landing aid for medium-to-small civil airports as well as a mobile tactical system for military emergency airstrip operations was unveiled recently by Laboratory for Electronics, Inc. of Boston. Called SPAR (for super precision approach radar) the LFE system weighs 1800 pounds, can be operated by one man, and for mobile military use can be erected in two hours. Expected cost, based on production orders, will be about $30,000 to $35,000, or about one-half that of an Instrument Landing System, one company official said.

Although the SPAR development was independently funded by LFE, military interest in the equipment has reportedly mounted following a recent two-week-long-demonstration at Andrews AFB, Washington, D.C. The services now are understood to be studying a preliminary order for five units (3-USAF, 1-Navy, and 1-Marines) and are planning to conduct additional evaluations with the LFE prototype. These include trials now underway by the Marines at Quantico, and others at North Field near Columbia, S.C., during USAF-Army tactical maneuvers later this month.

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NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AIRPORT LIGHTING APR. 27-29

A national conference on airport lighting is to be held Apr. 27-29 at the Astor Hotel, Milwaukee, with the Line Material Co. and Hevi-Duty Electric Co. as hosts. Joint sponsors of the conference are: Illuminating Engineering Society's Committee on Aviation Lighting; the Aircraft Committee, Lighting and Marking Panel; and the NEMA General Engineering Co., Aviation Ground Lighting. Air Transport Association and Air Line Pilots Association have been invited to take part.

Presiding at the sessions will be D. C. Miller, IES Committee chairman; G.M. Kevern, Lighting and Marking Panel Committee chairman; and W.F. Davies, NEMA Committee chairman. R. E. Madigan of Line Material and L.C. Lattin of Hevi-Duty are handling the meeting arrangements.

AOC ENDORSES MURRAY PLAN FOR FEDERAL AID TO AIRPORTS

The Airport Operators Council endorsed a federal-aid airport program of the type proposed by Under Secretary of Commerce Robert B. Murray, Jr., at its final meeting session in Tampa last week. The endorsement followed Murray's speech, in which he outlined the Commerce program. He told the group he wanted to "emphasize most strongly" that, now that Commerce has re-evaluated federal aid and has concluded that a program is justified, "we are determined...to do everything within our power to follow through vigorously on this decision..." He emphasized Commerce's feeling that "financial participation is justified only where airport locations and types of construction represent the highest degree of national interest and essentiality. We cannot justify spending federal funds on projects, however desirable, which are primarily of local rather than of national interest. Our aim is to carry out a truly national...program rather than attempting to meet a variety of local objectives."

Other speakers in the final session were as follows:

Louis R. Inwood, Philadelphia's director of aviation, raised the question of whether it is time to take a "new look" at the air carrier-airport relationship, in a session on airport fees, charges and concessions. He stated that he considered the air carrier to be the number one concessionaire at any airport. Stating that most airport managers have told CAB they favor applicants who want to serve airports, he observed: "We have taken a somewhat lofty attitude that we will only justify the need for service and let the Board select the carrier. Maybe this is right, but, on the other hand, between two other types of concessionaires, we would certainly exercise our business judgment..."

V. E. Gunlock, commissioner of Chicago Dept. of Public Works, warned airport managers not to tie themselves to long term landing fee contracts. He classed the scale of 4½¢ per 1000 pounds landing fee at Chicago for an airline with a substantial number of schedules as "ridiculously low". The agreement, he pointed out, runs 20 years from 1942 with an option to renew for seven years, one of the reasons for the long term deal being that airlines advanced funds for terminal construction at Midway Airport.

Frank Callahan of Chicago's Bureau of Aviation blamed many of today's air terminal problems on the airlines. In sharply-worded remarks touched off by a speech by Seeley V. Hall, United Air Lines' assistant vice president-facilities, on reduction of ramp clutter and speedier ramp service and baggage handling, Callahan asserted that "what is wrong with terminal buildings is airlines." Referring to Hall's observations on congestion at Chicago's Midway Airport and operations difficulties caused by the sprawled-out terminal, Callahan charged that the Chicago facilities were designed by the airlines and that the carriers' committee was headed by a UAL official. He added that the airlines had "demanded" the right to construct two fingers on the Chicago field and refused to allow the city to place concessions in the structures, thereby cutting the airport off from a source of income.

Port of New York Authority survey found that outbound air passengers are the best patronizers of concessions at the three New York airports. A significant discovery was that Newark attracted a substantial number of people who come to the airport to patronize the eating facilities. If these people are included in the survey results as "other visitors" they account for 45¢ of each consumer dollar spent at the field, with an average expenditure of $7.84, of which $7.12 is for food and drink. Outbound passengers, the survey showed, accounted for 47% of the money spent at La Guardia concessions, 53% at International, and 52% at Newark. In contrast only 17% of inbound passengers spend at La Guardia, 19% at International, and 21% at Newark. Average spending for outbound passengers is 61¢, $1.12, and 77¢ respectively and inbound 19¢, 18¢, and 29¢.

AOC voted to recommend to CAB that "it amend its regulations under the Civil Aeronautics Act so as to provide minimum altitudes of flight for aircraft landing and taking off at public airports." AOC members said that establishment of such regulations would solve many problems connected with local communities passing ordinances restricting flights to certain altitudes, filing of suits by residents near airports over low flying, and the like.

SAN FRANCISCO CALLS FOR BIDS ON AIRPORT CONCESSIONS

Public Utilities Commission has called for bids on concessions at San Francisco International Airport terminal building which will add about $220,000 to the field's income. Authorized for bid call were concessions for parking lot and buses, taxis, and limousines, estimated to bring, respectively, $95,000 and $170,000 annually to the city. A 25-year lease to build and operate a $200,000 garage is expected to bring a minimum rental of $8400 annually. Building and operating a $90,000 bank should yield an annual rental of $4,560 and installing a $500,000 pipeline and gasoline storage facilities should bring rental of $7,000 annually.

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CHICAGO MAY PEG LANDING FEES AT 20¢ PER THOUSAND POUNDS

Chicago city council is considering an ordinance which would establish landing fees at Midway and O'Hare fields at 20¢ per 1000 pounds of gross take-off weight. Ten airlines using Midway would be exempt because of contracts extending to 1964. They pay fees based on a sliding scale of an average of 4¢ per 1000 pounds. Independent freight operators would get a reduction in fees, as they now pay 30¢ per 1000 pounds.

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CLEVELAND AIRPORT TO GET NEW FACILITIES THIS YEAR

Nearly $2.5 million in additional improvements at Cleveland Hopkins Airport is scheduled for the current year. A $1,212,000 project for site development, parking lots, maintenance buildings, airplane mate construction, road approaches, and landscaping is to get under way this summer. Later in the year work is to start on the $1,240,000 north concourse of the passenger terminal now under construction. West concourse is now nearing completion.

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AIRPORT NOTES

(Terminal Buildings and Areas)

New terminal building at Worcester (Mass.) Airport is scheduled to open in May.

Cost of the new terminal building at Gen. Mitchell Field, Milwaukee, is expected to hit $3 million. Contracts already awarded total $1,634,098 and new bids just accepted amount to $1,043,000. Other bids yet to be advertised are for $300,000.

Low bids totaling $2,041,777 were received for five equipment installation contracts for the new administration building at Lambert-St. Louis Field, $241,777 over original estimate.

Ground is to be broken about May 1 for a new $1.4 million terminal at Weir Cook Airport, Indianapolis.

Dedication of the new Lincoln (Nebr.) Municipal Airport terminal building is Sunday (Apr. 25).

(Miscellaneous)

A rooftop heliport will be added to the Hotel Statler now under construction in Dallas.

N/S runway at Standiford Field, Louisville, will be lengthened 2800 feet, not 3600 feet as originally announced. Change is in line with Air National Guard recommendations.

The name of Harding Field in Baton Rouge has been changed to Ryan Airport in honor of Capt. William J. Ryan, member of the airport commission, who died in Jan. -E N D-