



Senate of the Italian Republic – III Legislature

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(pages 17, 18, 27, 28, excerpt translation)

Chairmanship of the Vice President TIBALDI
then of the President MERZAGORA

Continuation of the discussion and approval of the bill: «Estimates of expenditure of the Ministry of Defence for the financial year from July 1, 1959 to June 30, 1960» (571)
(Approved by the Chamber of Deputies).

NENCIONI. (...) Now, all this confirms that what the world press has said is true, because today we are facing some very serious episodes. I'm also referring to the last, very serious accident. It may well be that - as our colleague Cornaggia Medici said - it is the dangerousness of flying. I would not have said it, because it does not correspond to reality. It may be that it is the generic dangerousness of flying, but there is the fact that those who arrived and those who left from Malpensa airport in those hours and did estimate the weather conditions, perceived gusts of wind and water, the violence of the storm, the opinion cannot be that the disaster was caused by generic danger, but by high grade imprudence.

It is useless for Undersecretary Bovetti to tell us that many airplanes took off and managed to overcome the storm. Did he expect everyone to fall? (Comments). If the authorities had not given the «Constellation» the permission to take off at that time, because a quarter of an hour of delay was enough, we would not complain 68 dead today.

GIANQUINTO. He said so because his technical staff said so.

ANDREOTTI, *Ministry of Defense*. The airport manager cannot prevent the departure.

NENCIONI. It is not correct, because there are general security reasons.

ANDREOTTI, *Ministry of Defense*. Only in theory.

NENCIONI. And at the time of departure and arrival.

ANDREOTTI, *Ministry of Defense*. Only in theory. This is an international convention.

(...)

ANDREOTTI, *Ministry of Defense*. (...) Regarding flight safety in Italy, nothing will be left out to further improve the equipment and training of technicians, but we cannot ignore what was said by Senator Nencioni and Senator Gianquinto.

Regarding the accident of the TWA Constellation aircraft crashed in Olgiate Olona last Friday, any judgment about the origin of the accident is premature as a commission of inquiry is examining the causes that may have caused it. However, in the most absolute way, any responsibility due to insufficient air traffic control and flight assistance services can be excluded.

The statements by Undersecretary Bovetti are perfectly responsive to the truth, that is: a) it is exclusively up to the Captain to decide about the take-off of his airplane; b) other airplanes took off immediately before or after the Constellation of TWA flight 891. In fact, the Captain is responsible for the management and safety of the airplane during the flight time defined as «overall time», that is from the moment the airplane begins to move on its own to take off, until the moment it stops at the end of the flight: and this on the basis of an international convention. The Director of the civil Airport has the right to deny take-off or landing permission only for technical reasons existing on the field (snow, flooding of the runway, etc.). In all other cases of unfavorable weather conditions, outside the field, the Director of the Airport has no right to refuse the landing or take-off authorization.

GIANQUINTO. This is an interpretation.

ANDREOTTI, *Ministry of Defense*. It is an international agreement. We can propose some modifications: I am not mentioning any opinions, however, Mr. Gianquinto, but an international agreement that has been signed by all Countries.

Every airplane commander is also required to strictly observe the provisions concerning the minimum meteorological conditions set by the individual air navigation companies for the various types of airplanes and possibly for certain airports (horizontal visibility, height of clouds from the ground, wind on the ground, etc.).

These standards comply with I.C.A.O. («International Civil Aviation Organisation») international regulations.

Now I'm going to indicate the planes that left at the same time or a few minutes before or after the TWA 891, those airplanes that fortunately did not meet that cause - we hope we will know it one day - which unfortunately caused the very serious accident: LUFTHANSA 341 left for Munchen at 17:01; ALITALIA 207 landed at 17:18 from Zurich; a SABENA left for Bruxelles at 17:33; S.A.S. 684, coming from Rome Ciampino, left at 17:41.

With regard to the meteorological situation, it is specified: at the moment of TWA 891 take-off for Paris at 17:20, the weather at the airport was not prohibitive, as shown by the relative reports. It was only around 17:50 that some storms of moderate intensity began to appear in the area. Naturally, this does not mean that within the storm cloud formation in which the aircraft found itself at the time of the accident, the relative phenomena

(especially the turbulence) may have reached a particular intensity. I add that at that time the Milan control authorized deviations to all the aircraft that requested it, in order to avoid any difficulties. From the records of T/B/T communications, it appears that the TWA 891 did not made such requests nor dit it report any dangerous weather conditions; therefore no mention of the meteorological situation. Finally, it should be noted that the aircraft was equipped with radar.

Tendentious articles published by some foreign newspapers and unfortunately by some national newspapers too, have been widely rebutted in their absurd inaccuracy. For example, the article here mentioned by senator Nencioni, regarding the information given to I.F.A.L.P.A. by a S.A.S. pilot who would have found – textual words - «sleeping radiotelegraph operator staff», resulted to be, by the relating inquiry, defamatory and inconsistent and the pilot was deplored.