

Witnesses tell how jet fell ^{F/28-73} ^{Trib.} near Midway

By Sally Jones

THE UNITED Air Lines jet that crashed Dec. 8 near 70th Place and Hamlin Avenue, killing 45 persons, went into a stall altho full power was on and the jet fell on a row of houses because the angle of its nose was too high for the wings to provide lift.

This was the testimony of three witnesses before Chairwoman Isabel A. Burgess, of the National Transportation Safety Board, as a three-day hearing into the tragedy opened in the Sheraton-O'Hare Motor Inn in Rosemont.

Board Investigator William L. Lamb said the plane, a flight from Washington, D. C., was coming in for a landing at Midway Airport at 2:27 minutes

and 4 seconds past noon when the Midway traffic controller ordered the plane to "execute a missed approach," or go around again because another plane was landing too close ahead of it. The second plane was an Aero Commander private craft.

BECAUSE THE three members of the flight crew were killed in the crash, investigators pieced together the story of what happened next from the cockpit recorder and the computer at the O'Hare radar tower.

At 2:27:06, two seconds after the go-around-again order was given, the automatic stick-shaker alarm went off, a device which vibrates the land-

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Witnesses at U. S. hearing

How Midway jet stalled, fell

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ing controls and warns the pilot that the plane is within 7 per cent of stall speed, Lamb said.

At 2:27:15, 11 seconds after the go-around-again order, the O'Hare radar had its last opportunity to view the plane, and computed the plane's speed at 120 knots per hour ground speed at an altitude of 381 feet.

When the plane crashed, the tail hit the ground first. This occurred at 2:27:24, 1.7 nautical miles southeast of Midway.

WILLIAM J. Simonini, 140 W. Wood St., Palatine, who was on the ground, and Marvin Anderson of South Holland,

Walkouts in Italy

ROME, Feb. 27 [Reuters] — About 14 million Italian workers staged a general strike today, temporarily paralyzing industry and halting many public services. The walkouts ranged from 15 minutes by railway workers to 4 hours by bus drivers.

who was on the plane, gave testimony that supported the computer and voice-recording evidence.

Simonini was in the parking lot of the Nabisco plant at 73d Street and Kedzie Avenue at about 2:15 p. m. "I saw the aircraft break out of the overcast at about 450 feet altitude," he said. "The wing-flaps were down, the landing gear was down, but the plane looked too low."

"About the time the plane passed overhead, I heard a crackling, deafening roar, a power burst," he said. "The nose lifted up to about a 20 degree angle, but the aircraft kept settling down, even with all that power and the abrupt change in angle. I thought he looked like he'd recover."

Anderson said it seemed to him that the wing flaps were only partly deployed. Seconds before the crash, he said, the pilot revved up the engines, and "it sounded like full power at take-off, and the nose pitched up. The attitude [angle] of the plane seemed to be suf-

ficiently great to be a stall angle. Almost immediately after that the tail crashed into the tops of the houses."

ANDERSON SAID he and another passenger sitting over the left wing got one of the emergency doors open, but closed it when the wing suddenly burst into flame. They escaped thru a rear door. He said he couldn't sense any upward acceleration as the power was put on. "I thought we were just too low."

As the plane came in, the air traffic controller noticed it seemed to be drifting one-eighth to one-quarter of a mile off the course of the runway.

Two other ground observers told what they saw while this was going on. Thomas J. O'Brien, 7114 S. Millard Av., was in the home of relatives at 7259 S. Millard Av.

"I saw the aircraft come over the high-tension wires nearby," he said. "I heard the engines grow louder, and the right wing dipped and straightened out again.

"I HEARD A second in-

crease in engine noise, and the aircraft started to make a sharp right turn. I never saw or heard an aircraft so low in this neighborhood. When I lost sight of it, it was 100 feet off the ground and descending."

Louis Stalec, 3707 W. 75th st., who was walking his dog near 75th Street and Lawndale Avenue at the time of the crash, said, "It turned left and right and headed north, and then I saw it was going to drop on the houses."

Nine seconds before the crash the voice recorder carried these remarks—investigators are unsure about whom the voices belonged to:

"Want more flap?"

"Flaps 15.

"I'm sorry."

FIVE SECONDS before the crash there is the sound of the click of the flap-switch lever. There is another switch sound in which the landing gear is being pulled up. Then four seconds before the crash there is the sound of the landing-gear warning horn, which honked until impact.