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(250) KENNEDY PLANE

BY FRANK CAREY

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON, SEPT. 20 (AP)-THE PLANE WHICH CRASHED TWO YEARS AGO WITH SEN. EDWARD M. KENNEDY ABOARD IS NOW HELPING THE GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP SAFER AIRCRAFT.

DR. STANLEY MOHLER, AEROMEDICAL EXPERT FOR THE FEDERAL AVIATION AGENCY, SAID TODAY THAT THE TWO-ENGINE AERO-COMMANDER IS BEING STUDIED AT THE FAA-CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD ACCIDENT SCHOOL IN OKLAHOMA CITY BECAUSE OF ITS MANY GOOD SAFETY FEATURES.

KENNEDY, D-MASS.; SEN. BIRCH BAYH, D-IND., AND MRS. ~~SE~~^{Bayh} SURVIVED THE CRASH AT WESTFIELD, MASS., BUT THE PILOT AND CO-PILOT WERE KILLED.

MOHLER, INTERVIEWED AFTER ADDRESSING THE COLLEGE OF AMERICAN PATHOLOGISTS, SAID THE PLANE "HAS MANY GOOD FEATURES THAT PROVIDE FOR SURVIVAL" AFTER A CRASH. THESE INCLUDE THE "CRUSHABILITY OF THE FUSELAGE...(AND)...AN INTERIOR DESIGN THAT IS SMOOTH AND RELATIVELY FREE OF SHARP OBJECTS."

HE SAID THAT APPARENTLY THE PILOT AND COPILOT WERE KILLED BECAUSE THEY WERE SEATED SO CLOSE TO THE INSTRUMENT PANEL. KENNEDY WAS SEATED BEHIND THEM, AND THE BAYHS WERE BEHIND KENNEDY.

THE DOCTOR SAID THE PLANE "IS ONE OF THE BEST" FROM THE SAFETY STANDPOINT AND "IT'S LEADING TO IMPROVED FUTURE AIRCRAFT."

MOHLER TOLD THE PATHOLOGISTS THAT 1,000-PASSENGER, 3-STORY AIRLINERS ARE IN PROSPECT FOR THE MID-1970S AND RESEARCH IS BEING PUSHED TO PERFECT NOVEL SAFETY FEATURES FOR THEM.

IN LIGHT AIRPLANES, THE DOCTOR SAID, THE FAA IS ENCOURAGING WIDER USE OF SHOULDER HARNESSSES BY PILOTS AND PASSENGERS. HE SAID ONLY 10 PER CENT OF PEOPLE FLYING SUCH AIRCRAFT USE SHOULDER HARNESSSES.

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