

Inquiry in Reuther Plane Crash Reports No Signs of Sabotage

NMTimes — 16 Jul 70

WASHINGTON, July 15 (AP) — The National Transportation Safety Board said today that it had found no indication of sabotage to explain the jet air taxi crash that killed Walter P. Reuther, his wife and four other persons May 9.

The agency added that its investigation of the Pellston, Mich., crash was continuing and included a laboratory examination of the altimeter in the twin-engine Learjet 23A.

Although the plane's instrument panel was destroyed by fire after the impact, few parts displayed readable information, and the altitude shown on the captain's altimeter was 1,460 feet, the board said.

The early-model, \$500,000 Learjet, making an instrument approach to the Emmet County Airport, cut through trees at an elevation of 880 feet and crashed at 800 feet above sea level.

"Post-mortem examination of the crew members did not reveal any evidence of pre-existing disease or any physical injury or impairment that would have affected adversely the performance of their duties," the report said.

"Post-mortem examination of the passengers did not reveal any evidence of pre-impact injuries.

"This accident was nonsurvivable."

In a separate report on another accident, the board said that the pilot of an airliner that crashed near Bradford, Pa.,

Jan. 6, 1969, may have misread his instrument approach chart or his altimeter, or the altimeter may have been working improperly.

"The safety board is unable to determine precisely the probable cause of this accident," the agency added in its report on the Allegheny Airlines Convair 580 crash in which 11 of the 28 persons aboard — including both pilots — were killed.

The board said that of 13 potential causes examined, the three mentioned remained after final analysis.