

SUMMARIES OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT REPORTS

No. 1

President Airlines, DC-6B, N 90773 accident near Shannon Airport, Ireland on 10 September 1961. Findings of the Inspector of Accidents as released in October 1963 by the Minister for Transport and Power, Ireland.

1. Historical

1.1 Circumstances

The aircraft was on a non-scheduled international flight between Shannon, Ireland and Gander, Newfoundland and had been cleared for a right-hand turn following a take-off at night. It took off from the main runway - runway 24 - at Shannon Airport and made, soon afterwards, a left-hand turn. The angle of bank increased to such an extent that when the aircraft fell into the River Shannon, 5 000 feet from the southwest end of runway 24, it was at a bank angle of 90° or more. The amount of turn was approximately 140°.

1.2 Damage to aircraft

The aircraft was destroyed.

1.3 Injuries to persons

All 6 crew and 77 passengers aboard the aircraft lost their lives.

2. Facts ascertained by the Inquiry

2.1 Aircraft information

The aircraft was currently and properly certificated. At the time of starting the engines its gross weight was 313 lb over the maximum allowable, however, as some fuel was then burned off during taxiing and engine run-up, the take-off weight would have been approximately the maximum allowable. The aircraft's weight had been properly distributed.

The maintenance of the aircraft may not have been up to industry standards as was evidenced by the condition of the outboard tab push-pull rod assembly of the right-hand aileron and the manner in which the artificial horizon was handled.

2.2 Crew information

The crew were properly certificated.

2.3 Weather information

At time of take-off the weather conditions were below the minima authorized by the company.

2.4 Navigational aids

N/A

2.5 Communications

N/A

2.6 Aerodrome installations

N/A

2.7 Fire

There was no fire prior to impact.

2.8 Wreckage

N/A

3. Comments, findings and recommendations3.1 Discussion of the evidence and conclusions

The investigation revealed no failure of the power plants or propellers, nor was there any aircraft break-up prior to impact. From the maintenance record it was suspected that the artificial horizon at the captain's position might have been defective. There was an unexplained failure of the outboard aileron tab push-pull rod of the right-hand aileron. It was not possible to say what extent of uncontrollability of the aircraft this could cause. Specialists were unable to determine the consequential effects of the rod having, in an unexplained manner, become jammed.

There was a strong possibility that the captain, co-pilot and flight engineer were suffering from fatigue due to a long duty period, a short rest prior to the flight, and their amount of flying during the previous ninety days.

3.2 Probable cause

Failure of the captain to maintain control of the aircraft after becoming airborne due to either:

1) a defective artificial horizon;

and/or

2) a fault in the right-hand aileron tabs.

Contributory causes could have been unsuitable weather conditions and possible crew fatigue.

3.3 Recommendations

N/A

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| Non-scheduled International Take-off Loss of control Equipment and accessories - instrument |
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