

Wild plane ride mars return from Florida

By **KAREN SMITH**

The Champion

Ross and Jean Cescon feel lucky to be alive after Royal Airlines Flight 311 from Fort Lauderdale to Toronto turned into every flyer's nightmare.

The Milton couple were among 188 passengers on the Boeing 727 that thundered to a halt seconds before take off, prompting a panic-filled evacuation.

"I don't wish for anyone to have to encounter something like that," said Mr. Cescon, who was still shaken up Wednesday.

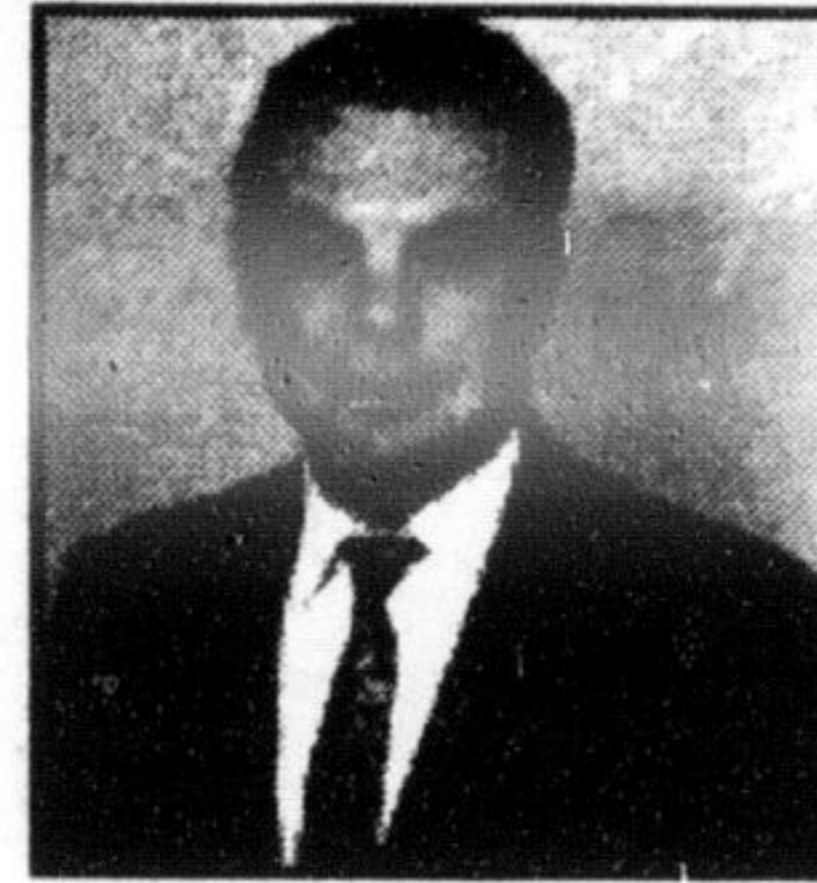
He said passengers, who were mostly Canadians, heard a loud bang while the plane was accelerating along the runway for take-off, and then it suddenly slowed down and stopped.

The pilot first told everyone to remain calm and stay in their seats, but a few minutes later ordered an immediate evacuation.

Emergency vehicles with their lights flashing rushed to the scene and flight attendants sprung from their seats to open doors.

Afraid that the plane was about to explode, passengers rushed for the nearest exits. "The flight attendants kept telling us to hurry up and move far away from the plane when we got to the ground," Mr. Cescon said.

Mr. Cescon said some panic-stricken passengers pushed and



Ross Cescon

shoved their way out of the plane's emergency doors.

He said he saw a woman throw her baby to a man below and witnessed several people break or twist their ankles after sliding to the concrete runway from the wing.

A total of 17 people were hurt, including three who were in a Florida hospital.

Mr. Cescon, who suffers from angina, controlled his attacks with pills after the ordeal and his wife suffered a minor injury to her wrist.

The passengers were put up in a hotel Monday night and flown to Toronto the next day.

Mr. Cescon, a real estate agent for Main Street Realty — Better Homes and Gardens — arrived home Tuesday and was back at work Wednesday.

He said he felt more shaken up in the days after the scare than he did the same night. He realizes it could have been a disaster.

Mr. Cescon said the plane had just enough runway left to stop without crashing.

"We are very lucky that they stopped the plane on time," he said.

A spokesperson for Royal Airlines explained that it was later determined that an engine compressor blew, and there was never a danger the plane would explode. The accident is under investigation.

Despite the traumatic episode, Mr. Cescon said he and his wife spent a nice week at their condo in northern Miami and they plan to fly again.

ACE plans picket

• from DEAF on page 3

"He kept saying don't worry, don't worry but of course a politician is going to say that. You've got to talk the talk and walk the walk. Put your money where your mouth is."

In response to recent changes, ACE representatives will picket Mr. Chudleigh's Main Street office April 17.

ACE and supporters from ODSP will demonstrate Tuesday at Queen's Park, where Mr. Lillie and other leaders of the deaf community will address education ministry representatives.

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