

Toronto Island Airport

ate them and protect the public interest must also increase. I believe that this infrastructure must increase before, not after the fact.

The Canadian Aviation Safety Board recently announced that it would hold a public inquiry into the risk of collisions involving aircraft on the ground, in response to a dramatic increase in near misses since 1983. There were 73 reported incidents in 1983, 124 in 1984, and over 200 in 1985. I agree that this increase justifies such an inquiry, especially when one considers the economic changes contemplated by the Minister's office in the form of deregulation, reregulation or a new regulatory regime. One must also consider the fact that the Department of Finance and the Treasury Board have a hypnotized attitude about the deficit and have applied pressure to cut costs and the size of the Public Service.

Of course, there are appropriate areas in which cuts or delayed expenditures can be made. However, some areas should not be cut, including some for which there is no complaint from the taxpayers about how much of their money is spent. These areas include proper, safe and secure facilities whether it is airports, railroads or other facilities. I have yet to hear a taxpayer of any political stripe complain about such expenditures. In fact, they would support increased expenditures in that area.

The situation will not improve if the same number of people or fewer must monitor the movement of increased traffic, whether it is at Toronto Island Airport or anywhere else.

Another statistic which needs the attention of the Canadian Aviation Safety Board, the Minister and the Government is the equally dramatic increase in what are called internally operating irregularities while in the air. In 1984, 92 incidents were reported where public safety may have been jeopardized and the minimum separation between aircraft was violated. The number of such incidents in 1985 was 164. This is of particular concern at a place like Toronto Island Airport with its high and ever-increasing volume of general aviation traffic. According to my information, Toronto Island Airport currently has the required number of traffic controllers to do the job. However, that is not the case for all airports. I urge the Minister and the Government to re-evaluate their policies of reducing the number of air traffic control staff by some 142 as a result of the A-base review.

Not only is an inquiry on ground near misses and air near misses necessary, a complete study of ground control and air control needs for the future must be conducted, including a clear assessment of our flight service station needs and airline dispatcher requirements. If the Government intends to move in the direction of more local control of airports, the structure of monitoring those aspects of air safety must be strengthened. There must be as many inspectors in the field as necessary, even a few more than necessary, to ensure that the job is done and to keep tight control while we undergo these changes in both regulation and jurisdiction.

As I mentioned to the Minister in Question Period today, once the taxpayer has committed and spent millions of dollars to build and maintain a large airport infrastructure, and

deregulation or a new regulatory regime allows an airline to pull out of an airport simply to suit its convenience or meet its "sound business practice", it would seem to leave the taxpayers in the lurch, with an airport on which they spent tens of millions of dollars. There must be some reasonable provision so that expenditures for such an infrastructure are not left idle, underused or wasted.

Last year, the people of Canada spent over \$6 million at Gander airport to improve it as an international airport. We do not know how many more millions of dollars were spent in the years prior to that. If Air Canada can decide, in the interest of "sound business practice", to pull out of Gander and go to St. John's, what will other international airlines do? If we enlarge the international operations out of St. John's, the taxpayers who have already spent a great deal in upgrading and improving the Gander airport will then be called upon to upgrade, improve and enlarge the facilities in St. John's. Other airlines operating internationally will say: "Well, this has all been done by Air Canada. Now that the Government has improved and enlarged the facilities in St. John's, we want to pull out of Gander too and go to St. John's."

● (1500)

There are two questions. What about the people and the employees at Gander, and what about the investment we have in Gander? It seems to me that some kind of long term planning needs to be done, although I know my good friends across the way are not noted for what is called long term, and in their books, there is paranoia about state planning, but in this area and in this instance it is more than justified. Then you allow your transportation industry, in this instance the airlines, to operate relatively freely within the context of that long term planning.

What I said earlier about Toronto Island Airport is now applied to Gander, so let us go back to Toronto Island Airport. That airport will need more improvements, not only a control tower but other items as well. It will need more personnel because traffic is bound to increase. It will need all of that and so will a lot of other airports in the country. You can do none of it if you continue in an atmosphere of paranoia and hypnosis about cut-backs, restraint, reducing the budget in an area that has to do not just with public convenience and the convenience of airlines or general aviation operators, but with safety and security. Those surely are not the kinds of areas you cut back on.

The cut-back of 142 controllers as a result of the A-base review, whatever the dickens that is, is the opposite direction. My colleague and good friend, the Hon. Member for Fraser Valley East (Mr. Belsher), the Hon. Member for Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin) and I along with other colleagues were in Washington the last three days. If there was any one thing that was urged upon us from people both for, against and in the middle of deregulation, it was not to make the same mistakes they did. The main one and the one urged upon us by people from both sides of the argument was to put in place, before opening the entries and exists, a sufficient