

*Supply—Transport*

Then there are a number of small items which I think could be looked into such as hand trucks and so on being supplied to the wharves in Newfoundland and Labrador at different ports. What I should like to speak about particularly, however, is the situation in which the town of Gander finds itself today. Gander grew around the great Gander airport, the airport which really gave Canada international status in air commerce. When we entered confederation and Gander became part of Canada the position and the bargaining power of Canada as a nation with respect to commercial aviation were enormously strengthened. Gander was developed and in time a modern town grew up around a really fine airport, and eventually a really splendid terminal was built there. In addition Gander airport has navigational facilities and other aids to air transportation which are as good as those of any airport in the world. It is a truly great and magnificent airport.

Trends in air travel during recent years have tended to make Gander an alternative rather than a regular stop in trans-Atlantic travel, for fewer and fewer air lines stop at Gander as a regular course. At the moment I do not think there are any air lines which make it a regular scheduled stop other than Trans-Canada Air Lines. When an airliner leaves New York now, say, for Europe, instead of making Gander an alternative they choose to make Goose an alternative stop. As hon. members know, Goose is a great military airport. Air transport now has a tendency to stop at Goose where it is not wanted instead of at Gander where it is needed. I think one of the reasons for this is that at least one if not two of the runways at Gander should be lengthened from the present length of 8,600 feet. In marginal weather pilots like a little longer runway. In good weather the runways are, I believe, considered adequate; in marginal weather they are not. If the weather is marginal and the pilot feels he cannot make the trip across the Atlantic without needing more fuel he has to decide whether to land at Gander or Goose, and he decides in favour of Goose and Gander is deprived of that much revenue. I have felt for a long time, and I have made the suggestion here before that it would be a sound investment if the Department of Transport added another thousand feet to one or better still to two of the runways at Gander. It is I think fairly evident, at least according to the information I have received, that with longer runways the Gander airport would be used more.

The investment which the Canadian government has in Gander is quite heavy. The investment which individuals who live in the

town which grew up around the airport have in Gander is considerable. I am told that at the present time there are 20 houses for sale in Gander and that in the near future there will probably be 20 more. The people of Gander are really concerned about the future of the place. My own opinion is that Gander is going through a temporary period of low activity. I rather think, and this again is a personal not a professional opinion, that as time goes by and there is a growth in air freight and an enormous growth in air travel, Gander will again come into the picture. I am referring, of course, to a growth in air tourist travel which, I understand, is the bread and butter of the passenger carrying commercial air lines.

In the meantime, there is a considerable amount of uneasiness. I am bringing this matter to the attention of the minister in the hope that, at the appropriate time, he can make a statement outlining what he believes to be the future of Gander. It has been suggested that, with the growth of air freight, Gander might become a transfer point for air freight. This freight would arrive at Gander in one type of plane and be transferred to a different type of plane for carriage to Europe. If that occurred, of course, it would be a very welcome development. I would ask the minister to bear this in mind as well.

A suggestion has been made that Gander might be declared a free port in order to make it more attractive for air travel. This is one suggestion that has been brought to the attention of the minister and his colleague the Minister of National Revenue. These are some of the things which I feel should be given careful consideration because a lot of people depend upon this airport for their living and they hope to be able to remain there. Gander was born of aviation and it seems to me that for the present, it must live by aviation. I ask the minister to look into this problem, which is a very real one: what is the future of Gander? Are developing trends in aviation likely to bring business back to this airport? Will fewer of these air lines use New York, which is becoming crowded, and instead take off from points on the mid west and perhaps stop at Gander before going on to other parts of the world? These are some of the questions which the citizens of Gander are asking themselves today and which I, on their behalf, pass on to the minister in the hope he can let us know what is likely to happen to this airport.

There is another matter in connection with Gander that I should like to mention. The hunters like to come from the United States to hunt in central Newfoundland. When there was a direct service from New York into Gander, more of them came than is now the