

tell us why Air Canada is not agreeable to leasing this aircraft or to letting the proposal proceed which would create jobs?

● (1420)

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, let me say first that discussions between Air Canada and Quebecair are going on now, so the door has not been closed on either side.

The first point to observe is that the board of Quebecair has not yet approved the project. The second point to observe is that Air Canada has expressed some views on the subject at the request of Quebecair, pointing out, for example, that it is all right to commit a plane for ten years but that it would have to be refitted after a while—someone has to pay for the refitting—and also pointing out that Air Canada, on behalf of the Canadian Government, is to be involved in the restructuring of Quebecair. This project will be either a success or a failure; the Government of Canada has an interest in ensuring that it is not a failure. For all these reasons the negotiations and conversations are continuing now.

Mr. Benjamin: I do not follow the Minister's line of reasoning. Even if Air Canada were to become involved with Quebecair, especially a direct involvement, it would automatically include the leasing of aircraft.

REASONS FOR NOT LEASING AIRCRAFT

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Madam Speaker, Air Canada currently leases L-1011 aircraft to Eastern Airlines of the United States and to Air Lanka of Sri Lanka, which have been approved by the Transport Ministry. Could the Minister tell us why Air Canada finds it so difficult to lease a jet to a Canadian operator if it can lease jets to foreign operators? By leasing this DC-8 to this travel agency, Air Canada will be reimbursed for maintenance, because it will be doing the maintenance and it will create about 60 jobs. What is the problem? No matter what the subsequent events may be, the leasing of aircraft sitting in the Arizona desert should be an objective of Air Canada since it told us in the Standing Committee on Transport a few days ago that it would be attempting to lease aircraft sitting out there in the desert doing nothing?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, obviously there is nothing wrong with the leasing of airplanes. Both Air Canada and Quebecair do it. Quebecair just leased three Boeing 737s to Pan American. There is nothing wrong in the device itself. The problem I have indicated is that should Air Canada on behalf of Canada, and Quebecair on behalf of the Quebec Government, be associated, obviously the two parties will have to share in both the profits and the losses. Consequently, since the losses of Quebecair have already been announced at \$16 million this year, the Government of Canada and Air Canada have an interest in not contributing to an increase in these losses, hence the attention that is given to it now.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF HIS BEATITUDE JOHN PETER XVIII KASPARIAN, ARMENIAN CATHOLIC PATRIARCH OF CILICIA

Madam Speaker: I have the honour of drawing the attention of the House to the distinguished presence in our gallery of His Beatitude John Peter XVIII Kasparian, Armenian Catholic Patriarch of Cilicia.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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[English]

AIR SAFETY

DUBIN REPORT RECOMMENDATION TO ESTABLISH AIR SAFETY BOARD

Mr. J. R. Ellis (Prince Edward-Hastings): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Volume I of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Aviation Safety recommended the establishment of an independent Air Safety Board. Mr. Justice Dubin submitted the report to the Minister in March, 1981, and it was presented to the House in May, 1981. Two years later the Minister of Transport has still not tabled the legislation. Can he indicate to the House when the legislation, which I know is ready, will be tabled and at least given first reading?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, it will be tabled as soon as there is a real possibility that the Committee will study the Bill. As my hon. friend just said, the Bill is ready to go. I regret that it is not already in Committee, but the Committee has been busy with other things. More than that, the rest of the Dubin report will also be ready in the Fall. Should we not be able to study it now because of the western initiatives Bill, we may be able to consider both the air safety Bill and the amendments to the Aeronautics Act in the Fall, together.

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY IN INTRODUCING LEGISLATION

Mr. J. R. Ellis (Prince Edward-Hastings): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question concerns the amendments to the Aeronautics Act. I gather from what the Minister said that, although both of these pieces of legislation are ready and that we could have dealt with them over the past six weeks to eight weeks, we will now have to wait until the Crow legislation is completed and will not get a look at them until the late Fall. Could the Minister tell the House whether he has some concern for air safety in the interim? By then he will be dragging this on for almost three years.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, just to be clear on one subject, the amendments to the Aeronautics Act will not be ready before the Fall. I did not say anything opposite to that.