

Inquiries of the Ministry

government of Manitoba, who told me that certain reports had appeared in Winnipeg emanating apparently from the union to which the hon. lady referred.

I asked at once if T.C.A. could inform me precisely what had happened. I knew there had been a meeting between the union locals in Montreal and Winnipeg and the management of the air line something over a week ago. I asked T.C.A. if they could give me an account of what had happened. I think, in view of the very widespread interest in this question, it would perhaps be just as well if I put on the record precisely what I was told.

T.C.A. advised that a recent announcement regarding the agreement between the Winnipeg and Montreal lodges of the international association of machinists, and concurred in by the company, does not in any way change the previously announced plans of T.C.A. in relation to the Winnipeg base. The announcement referred to was released by the international association of machinists.

Discussions have been held at the request of the union between T.C.A. management and representatives of the international association of machinists to clarify seniority rights of the air lines' maintenance and overhaul employees, particularly as they involve transfers from one location to another. In the course of these discussions, the question inevitably arose concerning the status of Winnipeg based employees whose seniority rights under existing agreements contained certain regional limitations. It is the wish of both air line management and the union to protect the rights of senior employees under any circumstances that might arise, and it was therefore felt necessary to modify the rules with respect to the application of seniority rights as stated in existing labour agreements between the company and its employees so as to provide wider scope for exercise of these rights.

The fact that this essential exercise in long term planning has been undertaken in no way implies that T.C.A. is contemplating immediate large scale reduction in its Winnipeg maintenance and overhaul staff. Employment at Winnipeg will continue to be related to the required volume of Viscount maintenance and overhaul work, as publicly stated hitherto by both the government and by T.C.A. management. I might say that as soon as I received this statement from T.C.A. this morning I communicated it to Mr. Evans so that if he had any questions in the legislature of Manitoba he would be able to give the information to those concerned.

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): May I ask a supplementary question. I have a short question for the Minister of Transport which would entail a short answer, such as is customary on orders of the day.

Will the Minister of Transport give the same assurance that was given by his predecessor in office, that employment at the T.C.A. base in Winnipeg will increase rather than decrease during this year and the coming years?

Mr. Pickersgill: I would say that to the best of my knowledge, sir, no such assurance was ever given by my predecessor, and I am bound by the statements that were made by the Prime Minister and by the company.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question on this matter to the Prime Minister. Has the Prime Minister received a telegram from the union in Winnipeg with respect to this matter, indicating in particular its concern about the report that the phasing out would start in 1964? If so, what has been his reply to the union in Winnipeg?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it may be that a telegram on this matter came in this morning, but I have not had a chance to deal with it yet.

[Translation]

Mr. Real Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Transport a supplementary question.

As the other day the Minister of National Defence made a statement in the house to the effect that the two radar bases of St. Sylvestre, in the county of Lotbiniere, and Parent, in the county of Chapleau, have been closed down in order to save this country \$6 million, what does the Minister of Transport propose to do with regard to the established fact that this country would save \$40 million carrying out repairs of T.C.A. aircraft in Montreal rather than in Winnipeg?

[Text]

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, I have no intention of seeking in any way to modify the position taken by T.C.A. itself in 1962 and reaffirmed by the Prime Minister on more than one occasion, that so long as the Viscount aircraft was in service with T.C.A., the maintenance would be done in Winnipeg.

Hon. Leon Balcer (Three Rivers): As a supplementary question, could the minister tell us whether he agrees with the statement which has been published in the press that if the move from Winnipeg to Montreal does not take place it is going to cost \$40 million more?

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, I have never posed as an expert in these matters and I am not going to start now. T.C.A. engaged management consultants who made certain statements that have been distributed in this house,