

*Transportation Accident Investigation Board*

this thing, all of which should be handled by a public inquiry.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** Resuming debate with the Hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Madam Speaker, this afternoon I would like to deal with two issues. First, I will speak to the Bill before the House, and second, I would like to deal with the tragic accident that occurred in Gander, Newfoundland, on December 12, 1985.

First of all, in referring to Bill C-2, Madam Speaker, we should remember it was not the Conservative Party that dreamt up this whole business of having a commission of inquiry on air accidents. In fact, it was the former Liberal Government which in 1984 proposed and, in fact, established the Canadian Aviation Safety Board.

Today, the Government is proposing to establish a new transportation accident investigation board, which will replace the Canadian Aviation Safety Board and also be responsible for other, similar types of accidents.

Madam Speaker, investigations are essential in order to maintain safety standards in this country. In 1978 we had the tragic crash in Cranbrook, British Columbia, and the Progressive Conservative Party, the Official Opposition at the time, asked the Government to set up a royal commission of inquiry. A few months later, the Government was defeated in a general election, and the new Conservative Government set up the Dubin Commission which reported several years later. On the basis of that report, the Government, in 1984, established the Canadian Aviation Safety Board.

[*English*]

I have here a speech from the Hon. Member for Vegreville, the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski), in his days as the transportation critic, opposition critic as he was in those days, for the Conservative Party. It is dated February 22, 1979. Let me read some of it. I think there will be a sentiment of *déjà vu* in what I will read. The Hon. Member for Vegreville said at that time, and I quote from *Hansard*:

I turn now to the question of air safety. In spite of the minister's assurance, it is clear that events of the recent past, and specifically over the last 12 months, have given Canadians clear evidence that there is serious erosion taking place in public air safety in Canada.

He adds further:

Rather than acting responsibly, this minister chooses to gloss over the issue and play the old reassuring game that all is well. I suggest that constitutes a clear of dereliction of duty on his part. We again call for a full public inquiry into the whole area of air safety so that all the facts may be known and corrective measures put in place. That is a minimum.

Ten years later that judicial commission of inquiry is something for which my colleagues and I in the Liberal Party have been asking, specifically in the area of the Gander air crash.

Just to refresh the memory of all Hon. Members on the Gander air crash, the crash in question occurred at approximately 6.45 a.m. on December 12, 1985, approximately one kilometre from the runway at the Gander International Airport. An Arrow Air DC-8 crashed to the ground. It had 256 passengers, eight of them were U.S. servicemen returning from a mission in the Sinai Desert. The remaining eight people were crew members. All perished in the crash. All were citizens of the United States of America.

Following that very tragic air crash we had the Canadian Aviation Safety Board do an investigation of the incident in question. I do not mean to complain about the quality of the investigators themselves. I have no reason to believe that anything went wrong in terms of the quality of the individual investigators, whether I am speaking of Mr. Tom Hinton of the Canadian Aviation Safety Board, Mr. Peter Bogue, or others. However, I am saying that the investigation was handled by the Board and by the Government in such a way that the CASB no longer enjoys the confidence of the Canadian public. Very few people now believe anything that has come out of the report of the Canadian Aviation Safety Board on the Gander air crash.

First, we had internal division within the Board. We had an interim report of the Board. We had a dissenting interim report of the Board. We had the Board that attempted to constitute itself in an evidence review committee to oversee the evidence, and at a subsequent meeting the chairman used this power to vote twice in order to dismantle the evidence review committee that had been established at a previous meeting.