

Supply

I want to take one statement he made in that very short summation on deregulation by this government since 1984-85. He said that there was no reduction in accidents in the air. The parliamentary secretary said that.

I want to give him one example of evidence that we, the minister and Transport Canada have which refutes that very statement. The Canadian Aviation Safety Board's figures for 1981 to 1984, prior to deregulation, show that accidents numbered 695 in 1981 and fell to 458 in 1984.

Then deregulation set in. This government embarked on its program of deregulation. From 1985 to 1991, the number of accidents went up. In 1985 there were 438 accidents; in 1991, 449 accidents. This is not rhetoric. These are figures released by CASB, the Canadian Aviation Safety Board.

I want to ask the member, based on this information, how he can say that there has been no reduction in the number of accidents in the air.

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the hon. member's question. It points out again how these opposition members and this member in particular like to manipulate numbers to mislead those who will read *Hansard* and those who are watching this debate right now.

Let me say at the outset that I am delighted we have *Hansard*. It is a printed record of what is said here in the House. It is quite clear through a review of *Hansard* that at no time did I use the words that the hon. member has just attributed to me.

I said that there is no change in the accident rate. There is a significant difference between the numbers in a given year of accidents and the accident rate. Clearly, if anyone would care to look at the numbers, they would note that there has been a tremendous increase in the volume of air traffic in Canada over the years.

For example, if there were twice as many flights in a given year, one would presume that at the same rate there may be, unfortunately, a few more accidents. If there is only one plane flying, there is considerably less chance of accidents than if there is more than one.

I always have to have a look at the hon. member's motivation when he brings out these facetious arguments with regard to manipulating numbers as he did the other

day in the House when he was asking our minister about the figures for regulatory safety inspectors and asking who was right.

I found it an interesting question, enough to pursue the matter. I found that both ministers were right, the minister who made a reply in this House several years ago to which the hon. member referred his question in the House this week, and also the current Minister of Transportation.

The member, as is usual to suit his purposes, is comparing apples and oranges. He is asking one minister about the regulatory safety inspectors and comparing his response to a question asked several years ago of the former Minister of Transport who was referring in his numbers to inspectors.

I have it here in the total system. This was back in 1985. His answer included air navigation and airport inspectors as well as regulatory safety inspectors.

• (1110)

Obviously, there will be, as there is today, more in terms of numbers when you include air navigation and airport inspectors in the figures of regulatory safety inspectors. These are two other categories of inspectors to which the former minister referred. It is a somewhat clever but deceitful effort to manipulate numbers to the member's advantage.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the parliamentary secretary's response. I want to point out at the outset of my comments that deregulation only applied to commercial aviation. It did not apply to the owner-operators, the general aviation class. It only applied to the commercial ones, the folks you and I buy tickets from to ride on their planes.

We have been playing with numbers. The reason I pointed out that deregulation talks solely about commercial aircraft is that the numbers the parliamentary secretary uses, the numbers the minister uses, while accurate, are meaningless in the debate about deregulation and about the Dryden inquiry. The real numbers from CASB indicate that from 1984 to 1991 the Canadian registered aircraft commercial operations accidents increased by 33.7 per cent. More important, and this comes back to a comment made by the parliamentary secretary just now, the total accident rate per 100,000 hours has gone from 8.3 in 1984 to 9.4 in 1989.