

*Aeronautics Act*

cept and to collect the charges and fees. We all know the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) today believes in the concept according to which he uses and we pay. I think that we should review with great seriousness that kind of system in government in view of the fact that aviation associations across Canada have complained some 20 times before the committee about the lack of consultation. What the amendment before us proposes is that, whenever there are 20 members or more who believe there is something significant which should be brought before the committee, there should be a process for so doing. Until now there has been no effective appeal procedure. Under the bill the minister asks to be licensed to make all regulatory changes relative to aviation without bringing them first before parliament, and then to be allowed to declare to the aviation users that they have no appeal or recourse through a proper appeal channel.

The Minister of Transport did not want witnesses to appear before the committee. He said that this was simply a housekeeping bill and therefore no witnesses should be called. The truth of the matter is that this bill changes the whole user-pay concept. It gives to the minister strong powers to allow him to establish user fees, to decide what they will be, how they will be collected, who will collect them and how often they will be collected. It is not merely a question of the user-pay concept.

Then we come to the great disparities in transport which are one of the catalysts in the disunity in this country. A great disparity occurs under the user-pay concept as it is applied to various modes of transportation. We find that in rail transportation the user pays some 74 per cent of the cost, that in air transport the user pays somewhat less than that, that in truck transport the user pays some 30 per cent and in marine transport some 19 per cent. This means that many regions of the country are gravely disadvantaged under the user-pay concept of the minister.

Furthermore, Bill C-4 locks in a regulatory, ironclad set of agreements whereby the minister can dictate at his own whim the way in which the user-pay concept is applied, which will have a drastic effect on various sectors of the country, so much so that we are finding, in the development of the Alcan pipeline, that a study is now under way to consider the transportation of pipe from Welland, Ontario, up the St. Lawrence Seaway, round the Panama Canal and up the Pacific coast to Alaska simply because it is far cheaper to send it that way than to send it across land. The real reason for that is the user-pay concept—that the user pays 74 per cent of the cost of rail transport as against 19 per cent of the cost of marine transportation. We are of the view that the minister should not have those kinds of powers and prerogatives to impose his will on various regions of the country.

The fact that we cannot haul steel pipe by rail across the country economically causes a loss which weighs heavily on the prairie region. The objective of the user-pay concept is to pay MOT's debts. In essence, what we have found is that the Department of Transport can indulge in all kinds of extravaganzas following which the user-pay concept comes

into effect. What happens is that those who dream grandiose dreams never need worry about the price tag because they can simply tack the price tag on to those who use the system. There is no better example than the imaginative but silly plan for Mirabel airport and the imaginative and silly, if not stupid, plan for Calgary airport. Max Ward of Wardair stated at the opening of the Calgary airport that no one had checked with them, one of the users of the airport, about the user-pay concept. This government goes ahead holus-bolus believing it has the prerogative to dream up heavenly ideas about what an airport should look like, and, irrespective of the price tag, tacks the price on to whoever uses it.

The amendment states that there should be recourse from a government decision: that whenever there are motions from various aviation groups which come to 20 or more members of parliament, they can appeal to Mr. Speaker to set up a body within the committee system which would allow for some kind of appeal procedure. I do not know how the government of the day can sit quietly on its hands listening to the kinds of speeches that have been made in the House about some of the dangers in air traffic today, the lack of controls in air traffic safety and the weaknesses in its own legislation, yet continue stubbornly to refuse to allow a process to be created whereby concerns about various policies affecting the aeronautics industry could be voiced. So long as the user-pay concept is in practice, the government can indulge in extravagance and simply pass on the cost to the users. What we ask for in the amendment is simply a system of checks and balances.

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If we are going to have the user pay policy, we ask that there also be a policy of user say. We are asking that there be a system whereby, if the government is going to impose a costing out for those who use aircraft facilities, those who use aircraft facilities have an input. At the present time that is not the case. Aviation groups say that they have complained 26 times to the committee and that they have attempted to be heard by the government. However, the government simply will not give them a hearing.

I would like to speak about the small aircraft industry and the tremendous disincentives the government has imposed upon it. Probably no other nation in the world is more naturally suited to the proliferation of air traffic than this country, unless perhaps it might be the Soviet Union. I can understand why countries like Luxembourg or Belgium might want to restrict the amount of air traffic, but in a country as vast and as sparsely populated as Canada the encouragement of air traffic makes sense. The majority of our resources are located far from inhabited areas. In many cases the only way to reach the resources of this great land is by air.

Few people understand the scope of Canada. It is farther from Yellowknife to the North Pole than it is from Yellowknife to San Francisco. It is a shorter trip from Edmonton to Mexico City than it is from Edmonton to Halifax. We live in a very large land. Many of our resources are in places where there are no railways, no docks and no highways. Yet we have