

*Oral Questions***AIR CANADA**

CALL FOR DIRECT FLIGHT FROM OTTAWA TO ST. JOHN'S

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. In view of the proposed changes in the Air Canada schedule, in view of the fact that St. John's is the only provincial capital not served by a direct Air Canada flight from Ottawa, and in view of the fact that all Newfoundland members of the House of Commons would like to have direct access to our provincial capital, can the minister say whether he will make representations to Air Canada for such a direct flight from Ottawa to St. John's?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I will obviously do that. But my very recently acquired information is that there will be such a service direct to St. John's, and that will be announced next week—or start next week. I will get further information tomorrow, Madam Speaker, because I would like all members from Newfoundland to be properly served in terms of transportation from the capital.

Mr. MacEachen: Especially on the outward run.

* * *

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

PROTEST AGAINST PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF ALUMINUM COMPANY OF CANADA PLANT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Lorne McCuish (Prince George-Bulkley Valley): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. The Aluminum Company of Canada has declared its intention to proceed with the Kemano II hydro-electric project in central British Columbia under provisions of a 1949 agreement with the province of British Columbia.

The Aluminum Company of Canada feasibility studies disclose that the project will result in irresponsible and irreparable environmental damage, including the loss of spawning grounds on the Maurice, Skeena, Nechako and Fraser River systems, a change in water tables affecting both municipal and private water and sewage systems, and the loss of agricultural lands and wildlife habitat. Because of the grave danger which will affect over 200,000 people, would the minister assure this House and the people of British Columbia that the federal government will not permit the Aluminum Company of Canada to proceed with this project?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, my understanding is that the British Columbia government has already given assurance that there will be a full public inquiry before this matter is proceeded with. We will, of course, see what happens in that inquiry and make a full study of the environmental effects—particularly as they relate to fish species—before coming to a final conclusion, in order to assure ourselves that there is no damage in proceeding with this

matter, if that is the decision of the British Columbia government.

Mr. McCuish: Madam Speaker, surely the minister is aware that his predecessor had taken positive steps and there will be ample evidence in his own office as to the impact? I would like the assurance of the minister that he has made it loud and clear to his counterparts in the British Columbia legislature that he will not accept the conditions of this project as they now stand.

Mr. Roberts: Madam Speaker, as I indicated, there is going to be a full public inquiry. I think it will be wise for us to delay an absolutely definitive decision until we see the full effect of that inquiry.

* * *

PRIVACY

OPENING OF MAIL BY RCMP

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. Two weeks ago the minister gave a commitment to this House that within a few days, as he put it, he would make the kind of presentation that hon. members would like to hear on the subject of mail-opening. The Solicitor General knows, of course, that although the RCMP have been opening mail illegally for years, they were not able to produce any such evidence before the McDonald commission.

Will the Solicitor General now perhaps confirm that, as an alleged former civil libertarian, he understands the people of Canada want no further incursions into their privacy, and will the minister tell this House why there has been such a lengthy delay in preparing this important study?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, first I would like to remind the House that there is no intention on my part or on the part of the government to change the rules which prohibit the opening of mail, by regulation or in any other way. If it is to be done, it will be done by bringing forward legislation for the full consideration of this House.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): When?

Mr. Kaplan: I indicated recently that because of the announcement of the McDonald commission, its report would be forthcoming before the end of the summer and that no action would be taken before that time. I did tell members that a report is being prepared. I have seen a version of it that does not contain enough statistical information, but in view of the fact that the matter is not urgent, that no pressing action is contemplated by the government or by me at this time, I think it is worth waiting to have the opportunity for a very full report to be brought forward, and I intend to bring it forward as soon as it is available.

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, I am not surprised that the statistics are unavailable. My supplementary