

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

initiate an investigation if the hon. member can present evidence of violations. We are waiting for that, Mr. Speaker.

TRANSPORT—SUMMERSIDE P.E.I. AIR SERVICES—RESULT OF DISCUSSION WITH LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, this evening I am going to deal with a question which was raised some time ago following a visit by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) to Prince Edward Island. It was a much delayed visit, one which was planned for late last year or early this year and had a number of aspects to it, including the imminent suspension of air service to Summerside, P.E.I. That suspension took place in January. Prior to that we had an assurance that the minister would consult with officials in P.E.I., with the premier, with responsible officials in Summerside, with representatives of the Board of Trade and of other important groups. Unfortunately, such consultation did not take place until March.

On March 14 I asked the minister directly whether there had been consultation concerning the adequacy of air service, particularly in view of the suspension of air service to Summerside, P.E.I. I pointed out that one of the most serious aspects following the suspension was the removal of the air terminal. In light of the fact that Eastern Provincial Airlines was granted a suspension for two years, not a termination of air service, this was more than a little disquieting to the citizens who thought that a permanent decision had been taken with regard to winding up the facilities at CFB Summerside. The minister said that it was for the airline to decide about disposing of its building and facilities, but I think the minister may recognize that more is at stake than the decision taken unilaterally by Eastern Provincial Airlines.

• (2220)

Following the suspension of air service a number of difficulties have arisen. Some loss of time has been encountered by the business community and there has been a definite increase in air freight costs to Summerside from other parts of Canada. This I have experienced myself. There is an additional tariff involved in moving goods from Charlottetown to Summerside. In addition, it costs \$10 more for a person to land at Summerside than it did prior to the air service suspension in January. This

does not please the people who live in Summerside and west of it.

Proposals have been advanced to the Canadian Transport Commission by Roberts Air Service which has indicated a willingness to provide service between Summerside and Moncton. I understand that this would be simple from the standpoint of the Canadian Transport Commission and the other competitor in the area, Eastern Provincial Airlines who operate out of Charlottetown. At the present time there may be a minor objection from EPA but not sufficient to prevent an air service to and from Summerside.

This is important for two basic reasons, Mr. Speaker. One is the importance of increased regional air service. We have seen some of this with EPA from Charlottetown to Halifax and Fredericton. Even more important is the situation with regard to Summerside because of the new lease of life given to it by the announcement of permanency. The business community and the citizens of Summerside believe that in light of these new circumstances a more adequate air service should originate there. I hope that the representative of the Minister of Transport can tonight give us an assurance that adequate air service will be restored to Summerside.

[Translation]

Mr. Albert Béchard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) was meeting today with the members of the Atlantic Transport Commission in St. John, he cannot answer tonight the hon. member for Egmont.

However, I am aware of the discussions which have been held in Charlottetown on the need for air transportation in the Summerside area, in the hon. member's beautiful province where I stop when travelling to that beautiful part of my constituency located in the St. Lawrence and called the Magdalen Islands.

[English]

A number of proposals were discussed at that time, and on April 17 an application to the Canadian Transport Commission was filed by Roberts Air Service to provide service between Summerside and Moncton. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the hon. member that this matter is now before the air transport committee of the Canadian Transport Commission for consideration, and a decision is expected fairly soon.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.