

Air Canada

airline; we would be giving them authority, as it is stated in the bill, to buy and operate aircraft, hotels and other accommodation, surface vehicles and facilities for the transportation and housing of persons, goods and mail. If the bill is passed, Air Canada will be authorized to buy condominiums at all the places to which they fly. They would want condominiums so their crews could stay there. We would be allowing them to buy trucks and other vehicles of transportation. The only thing I cannot see them operating is a railway, although they might even consider that. There is nothing in our transportation system which would surprise me very much. I would not even be surprised if Air Canada wanted to start a railway operation. What we want from them is an efficient airline.

I believe they should buy the kind of accommodation that is necessary. Hotels in Canada are a disaster. Accommodation in a hotel in Canada costs twice as much as comparable accommodation in the United States. Why is that so? Simply because in Canada they make no attempt to fill the hotel. Most of the time our major hotels are half full. From time to time there is a convention, and then they are filled. But generally speaking our hotels are only half filled, and therefore the price is doubled to cover the overhead. Therefore, we would like the airline to go into the hotel business to the same extent as other airlines, so they can make arrangements on behalf of customers and so their customers can make reservations at hotels for reasonably-priced accommodation. This may have to apply to meals as well. If it does not, there will be less and less travel in Canada, and more and more travel outside Canada.

● (1450)

Our forefathers did not set up Canada National Railways to make money. When Trans-Canada Air Lines was set up, it was set up with government financing, and with the backing of the general public, to provide a service. We have an immense country, and the only way to unite it was to provide a transportation facility to link it up. Today, when it costs \$350 to go to Vancouver, most people would rather go to Florida or Mexico for half that price and have their holidays arranged by airlines through package tours. With the exception of Banff and several other ski tours in the winter, Air Canada does not have any package tours. We should be providing that kind of service to the Canadian people. We should be attempting to unite the people of this country, and there is no better way of doing that than by having people travel around the country.

A fantastic number of people in the province in Quebec could tell us more about every city in Florida, Mexico or in the continental United States, than about parts of Canada. I do not blame them, because all kinds of arrangements have been made to facilitate their travel to those areas. If you travel by car, your oil company will put together a package, arrange for hotels and provide all kinds of advice so that you can have a pleasurable trip. In Canada, nothing similar to that has been done for most areas. In my area the cost of accommodation, air fare, rail fare and all other costs which face tourists are so high that tourist activity is decreasing and many tourist opera-

[Mr. Peters.]

tors are going out of business. I presume this is true in all the provinces.

Air Canada has a great reputation. It is probably the best airline I have ever used. The airline leaves much to be desired on the ground, however, and its tariff structure is a disaster. I do not think it is doing anything for the airline. It certainly does nothing for me, and I think it does nothing for the travelling public. Rather than getting vouchers to travel on Air Canada, I wish members of parliament had to make expenditures and be rebated. In that way we would know exactly what our travel costs and we would be much more concerned about problems than we are. It is not hard to get a \$500 voucher to travel on Air Canada, but if we had to pay our fare and be rebated, we would wonder why it costs \$500 to go to Vancouver and back.

Mr. Stewart (Cochrane): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, because he is a good friend of mine. I have a great deal of respect for him, but the speech he is making should have been made at second reading. We discussed these things at length in committee. We worked hard there. We have motions Nos. 1 and 2 before us, and up to this point none of the remarks made by the hon. member have had any bearing on them. It seems to me that it is up to you, Mr. Speaker, to call the hon. member to order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Hon. members will have noticed that in the past the Chair has been lenient. Sometimes hon. members give us a little tour and then come back to the subject before the House. Ground transportation is mentioned in motion No. 1. The hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart) indicated that this has been discussed at length, but when he rose I was just about to remind the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) that his time had expired. So perhaps there is no point of order to rule upon.

Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland-Colchester North): Mr. Speaker, much of what the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart) has said is accurate, but I believe the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) was trying to express the concern of hon. members from all parties in relation to what they hope Air Canada will provide in the way of service in the days ahead.

Coming from the maritimes, I am concerned because Air Canada is to a certain degree endeavouring to become involved in a field in which one Crown corporation is already involved to such an extent that it has caused great difficulties for the private sector. When we were endeavouring to secure the government's approval to bring trucking under the Maritime Freight Rates Act and to obtain subsidies so that there would be competition for the railways and, hopefully, through competition, more realistic freight rates, we discovered that the CNR, a Crown corporation, then moved into the trucking industry and dashed one of the hopes we had. We had hoped that competition would bring down truck rates and freight rates in general. I would be very concerned if Air Canada were to embark upon any venture which would result in the elimination of still more privately-owned trucking firms in favour of