

*Government Orders*

In May 1985 the federal budget announced the government would pursue "the development of a new management structure for the federal airport system in Canada".

Two months later the "Freedom to Move" transport deregulation position paper, with which all of us are so very familiar, declared "options for a new self-sustaining system for managing federal airports are being developed".

By October of that year the then Minister of Transport had appointed an airports task force to consider new management structures for the federal airport system. The task force's report, released a year later, recommended the establishment of local airport authorities wherever possible.

On April 9, 1987 the then transport minister, now Minister for International Trade, announced a new policy allowing "provincial, regional or local authorities to assume direct management of airports". The minister cited cost efficiency and better service of local interest as the key goals of the policy.

If we read the words of the current Minister of Transport when he spoke at the commencement of second reading of this bill, we see that he said two things:

Our objectives from the beginning were to allow the airports to better serve the local community interests; to enhance regional economic development potential; and to permit the national airport system to operate in a more cost effective and commercial manner.

Later, as reported on page 15263, he went on to say:

But with local authorities at the controls, airports will be quickly able to respond to changing needs and market forces with innovative ideas.

It sounds like an ad for the junior chamber of commerce. I suspect the minister was once one of those folks before he turned grey.

Let me reiterate the key words: "airports will be quickly able to respond to changing needs and market forces with innovative ideas". Nothing could condemn the policies and the actions of this government more than the minister's admission that this government does not know how to be innovative when it comes to managing its airports in a commercial sense and that it does not have the ability to quickly respond. I do not say that personally in terms of the minister but in terms of

the philosophy of the Conservative Government of Canada.

The policies of the transport department are such that it does not understand that public enterprise can be efficient and can be innovative and can return revenues, i.e. profits to the taxpayers.

Yet we have examples such as Pearson Airport. I do not have the figures here today, but it returns money to the taxpayers of Canada. Other major airports as well. Vancouver contributes back to the taxpayers of Canada. Other airports like my own and I suspect the one in Hamilton do not return a profit. It is not to say that they cannot, but under the current situation they have not been able to match their revenue with their expenditures.

The question I lay before us today is: Is the government just copping out of saying that it does not know as a government how to run an airport and therefore wants to turn it over to a community group so it can do it?

There are a number of dangers in this pursuit. We will have a situation where there will be two different groups operating at one facility. I assume we will have a manager of the air side of the airport: someone who is the senior person responsible for air traffic control where it exists, someone who is also responsible for crash fire rescue, someone who is responsible for the air traffic control and all the other systems that are outside the parameters of the building and the rental lands.

Then this community group or a provincial authority, because that option is there too, will be on site. It will be managing the building, managing the lands and deciding on who should rent what spaces.

I do not think it is clear, because we have not had the full paper debated in the House, as to who decides which planes get to park where. Is that part of the revenue base that is controlled by the community group? Is that part of the debate that has been ensuing within the Ministry of Transport for a number of years now about the removal of general aviation from our airports, to shuffle them off? This is not just from Pearson, where I recognize there is a different kind of problem, but even in my community of Thunder Bay. There is an attempt to price out of existence or to frustrate general aviation small plane owners and force them off to some pasture elsewhere in the region to keep them away from the