

Provision of Moneys to CNR and Air Canada

the Transport Commission very closely in order to make certain we are in fact not simply picking up that tab when there is no justification for doing so.

Another matter of interest and concern to the city of Regina is air service. This of course also comes within the scope of this bill. Regina is served by Air Canada operations, and a good many of their services are excellent and commendable. There have been complaints from time to time about the inadequacy of services to eastern Canada. Over the past year and a half I have had the opportunity, as a result of facilities made available to members of Parliament, to make use of Air Canada services in travelling between Ottawa and my constituency. I have done so in looking after the needs of my constituents and carrying out my duties as a member of Parliament.

Very often I have found that Air Canada service is quite good. I have one complaint, and that is that there is no direct service between Regina and eastern Canadian points. I made representations about this matter when I made my first speech in the House of Commons on September 23, 1968.

Subsequently I wrote to the former Minister of Transport and Air Canada, drawing to their attention the representations I had made in respect of direct air connections between Regina and eastern Canada. I received a very nice reply from the Acting President of Air Canada in which he informed me that it was the intention of Air Canada to introduce a new direct air connection between Regina and Eastern Canada in the spring of 1969. He hoped that I would have the patience to wait until this new service could be inaugurated.

• (4:30 p.m.)

Well, I did have the patience to wait and the new service was introduced. It was used by many people. The occupancy rate was very high during the summer season of 1969. But to the surprise of everyone in the city of Regina who was interested in the matter, and to my surprise, when the fall schedule of Air Canada was published it was found they had eliminated this direct connection between Regina and Toronto. A great deal of protest was made about the matter. Then Air Canada, for the first time, informed the people who made inquiries that their plan was to introduce this new service initially for the summer season only and that it would be introduced again in the spring of 1970. They

[Mr. Burton.]

said that it would continue from then on a year around basis. Certainly, I believe it would have been rather more satisfactory had Air Canada taken the people who made inquiries into their confidence earlier and told them of the plan of operation they had in mind.

There is another matter to which I should like to make brief reference. Although it is related to the provision of adequate air services in Regina I recognize that it does not come directly within the scope of this bill. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that you will be indulgent with me in this regard. Currently, there are negotiations under way between the city of Regina and the federal Department of Transport for the purchase of some property at the Regina airport which is still owned by the city of Regina and in which the Department of Transport has expressed an interest. I understand that negotiations are under way and I hope an agreement may be reached which will be satisfactory to the city of Regina, the people of Regina and the federal government in this regard.

I could go on to mention the many aspects of freight rates which are of interest to the people of western Canada. I could also mention some other aspects of the provision of freight services by our railway companies. However, there is only one particular point I should like to make at this time. It has to do with railways and the potash business. When the potash industry first developed in Saskatchewan it seemed logical and obvious to most people that the way to move the potash to markets would be by the railways. As a consequence, the railways extended their facilities. There was co-operation and there were negotiations between the railway companies—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Mr. Burton: I could finish in just a couple more minutes, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Does the House give unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): There is not unanimous consent.

Mr. Louis-Roland Comeau (South Western Nova): Mr. Speaker, I shall not take too long, but I felt I should say something about this