

Toronto Island Airport

major point the work of the committee may have been useful, although the Parliamentary Secretary gave me some reason to be uncertain about that. The main concern expressed is that this should not become a jet port or an airport which will accommodate noisy planes or such a large volume of planes as to disrupt the surface traffic patterns downtown. The main reason for a large volume would be the landing of jets, quite apart from the question of their noise. This was the central part of a debate in Toronto City Council for several years which resulted in that lease arrangement referred to. That allowed a STOL port but not a jet port. The main concern of our Party was to focus on that and make sure this Bill was written in a clear enough way so that the conditions of the lease regarding the use of jets could be protected.

Our concern was in part whether the lease would be superseded by the legislation. Various opinions were given. However, there was an amendment agreed to by the Government as follows. Where it says that the commissioners shall, in accordance with the terms of any agreement entered into, and so on, make by-laws for the regulation and control of the airport, et cetera, it refers to jet-powered aircraft. In other words, they shall do this in accordance with the terms of any agreement they have entered into. That, I take it, includes the lease. It also says that they may, in a like manner and subject to like conditions, as in the case of by-laws, make by-laws and so on, but where there is no such agreement they may or may not. But where there is an agreement, they shall do it in accordance with the agreement. I am hopeful that that amendment will protect the effect of the lease signed three years ago. I was made a little less certain of that when the Parliamentary Secretary said that jets are now permitted to land there in an emergency.

Mr. Forrestall: Of course they are.

Mr. Heap: He adds: "Of course they are".

Mr. Forrestall: If you lost your wings and there was a runway under you, where would you go?

Mr. Heap: However, he has opened the prospect, through enlarging the runways and bringing in more sophisticated control equipment, of encouraging a great many more emergencies.

Mr. Mazankowski: You would rather see the passengers perish?

Mr. Heap: We know the Government of Canada has traditionally had a very flexible idea of what is an emergency. That is to say, there are emergency powers under the War Measures Act, which the Government has liked to use in other times than wartime or even when there was not an emergency. An example would be during the four years following World War II. I hope it is not the intention to redefine "emergency" to allow frequent or even regular landing of jets on the Toronto Island Airport. There are some other concerns as well, but that is the central concern and I am very happy that the Hon. Member for Beaches (Mr. Young), with the support of the

Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia), was able to persuade the committee to introduce at least that amendment. Perhaps had there been more foresight we would have asked for a better definition of the word "emergency". I understand the Minister agrees with his Parliamentary Secretary because he was shouting that we do not want them to have to use parachutes.

Mr. Mazankowski: No, I did not say that. I said I don't want the pilots and passengers to perish. That is what I said. Perish. Die.

Mr. Heap: I thought you said parachutes. No one is asking that they should perish. What I am concerned about is that future regulations of Government do not stretch that word "emergency" beyond what is absolutely necessary for life. It should not be used as a regular alternative landing field instead of Pearson Airport.

Some of the other concerns dealt with the matter of the tunnel. Nothing in the amendments prevents the building of the tunnel except the terms of the lease. The terms of the lease can be changed with the agreement of City Council, as can the terms reflecting the use of jet planes. However, there can be pressures put, through extension of the runways and facilities, such as to make it almost impossible to refuse the use of a tunnel. In other words, there will be a creeping extension of the airport which will perhaps some day include a tunnel. This is something that the people of the City of Toronto and Toronto City Council will need to watch very carefully.

● (1440)

A tunnel at the Toronto Island Airport could have two very destructive results. It could eventually bring an unlimited number of private automobiles onto the Toronto Island. At present there are some vehicles there which are strictly under the control of the Metro Parks Department. The Island is a wonderfully quiet and restful place for that reason. In the area in which there are several hundred houses people can walk and children can play without dodging cars. There is no traffic noise there and it is a very restful place. The whole park area is, likewise, restful. There are a few maintenance vehicles such as the fire engine and the police vehicles, but they are driven by public servants who operate with that sense of obligation. The park is a very valuable resource for 200,000 to 300,000 people who live in the downtown area of Toronto. Many other people go there as well, but it is particularly used by people from the downtown area where there are very few parks and there is a great deal of hot concrete in the summertime.

It is predicted that by the end of this decade the number of passenger movements will be increased by one-third from 150,000 to 250,000 per year. Presumably they will be further increased after the end of this decade. There is a concern that the tunnel would provide a means of bringing cars onto the Island as well as bringing passengers to the airport.

A further problem exists with that tunnel at its other end. The harbour front is becoming a residential and recreational area for the people of Toronto. Residential buildings to house