

Air Canada

The unions representing company machinists, ticket agents and flight attendants have also vowed to fight the Bill, but Godin says they're not supported by their members.

"We find their members don't share the opinions of their union leaders," he says. "There's an effort within the unions to counter some of the statements of the union leaders.

"One flight attendant in Toronto has complained that her union is wasting its money to fight the deal while the pilots are using their money to get a good deal."

He said a meeting in Winnipeg to rally Air Canada employees against this sale attracted only 70 people.

That is 70 people out of 2,200 employees. The article continues:

From our poll of the employees, 80 per cent favour privatization, while 10 per cent say they don't know enough about it.

● (1540)

The Bill protects the employees. We need to protect Air Canada and we have. The Bill says that not more than 25 per cent of the shares can be owned by foreign investors. The employees are encouraged to buy shares and they have the pride in the company to do so. Let us go ahead and pass this Bill because all those concerns have been covered. It will be good for Canada and good for Winnipeg.

Mr. Manly: Madam Speaker, I have a couple of questions. The first relates to a comment made by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—St. James (Mr. Minaker) about some Liberal campaign material. He referred to it as an outright lie. I would not want to get into that dispute. I certainly would not want to defend the Liberal campaign material. I have not seen it and so would not necessarily agree with the Member.

However, when he talked about outright lies it struck a chord with me. I thought of the statement of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) in 1985 when he said very clearly that Air Canada was not for sale. Yet, here we are debating the sale of Air Canada. I do not know what the Hon. Member wants to call that statement by his leader. How can people believe in a government that says one thing in 1985 and does completely the opposite in 1988?

Another example is the trade agreement with the United States. In 1983 the Prime Minister, along with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), the former Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark), when running for the leadership of the Conservative Party, said that the trade agreement with the United States was a non-starter. There was no way they were going to get involved in something like that because it would be a disaster for Canada and would be rejected by the people of Canada. Yet today we have to deal with the Government trying to push through a trade agreement with the United States.

When the Prime Minister talked to the Canadian people in the 1984 election campaign, he talked about social security programs being a sacred trust. One of the first things he tried to do after he got elected was to cut the indexation of old age

security. He succeeded in cutting family allowances for young people.

Getting back to the question of outright lies, how can the Hon. Member campaign in the coming election—and it is coming sooner or later, thank goodness—on the question of credibility and trust when his leader says one thing and leads a Government which does the diametrically opposite thing?

Mr. Minaker: Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member who just spoke gives half-truths. He left out what was actually said by the Prime Minister at that time. He made the statement that the Prime Minister said he was not going to sell Air Canada. I will quote exactly what the Prime Minister said and I hope the Hon. Member listens carefully this time. The Prime Minister's full statement was: "There may be some persuasive arguments in the case of Air Canada that some people can make in regard to the disposition of equity. I'll take a look at it, but Canada needs a national airline".

Three years later Canada has three national airlines. That is the result of deregulation and the passage of the National Transportation Act. They have created stable and viable airline services to the public of Canada. We can sell a portion of Air Canada at this time because we have three national airlines as a result of deregulation by the Government.

I suggest that the Hon. Member get the full facts before he gives half-true statements about credibility because his credibility suffers when he does that.

Mr. Taylor: Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the address of the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—St. James (Mr. Minaker). He made some reference to Crown corporations serving frontier regions. Some Crown corporations do serve frontier regions and that is a very worthy thing to do. However, I wonder how true that is in connection with Air Canada.

I noticed that the frontier regions of the Province of Alberta, the far northern areas including Fort McMurray, were not served by Air Canada. They were served by a private firm, PWA, which did the pioneering into the far north. Although there may have been a lot of jokes made about PWA in Fort McMurray, it was the only air service they had. It was not provided by a Crown corporation but by private people who had invested in an airline, who were willing to take a risk to bring that service to those people. I know that it was sometimes called "Please Wait Awhile" or "Pray While Aloft", but I do not know of an accident that PWA had while servicing that area.

Private industry has done much frontier work. As an example, the CBC has done some splendid work in the frontiers. Lake Louise, which is hardly a frontier region, but which is in the mountains, gets very little radio service. When they tried to get the CBC into the Lake Louise area, they were told that CBC does not have the money, yet it has thousands of dollars to spend on radio in places like Toronto. Perhaps the idea that Crown corporations serve frontier regions better than private industry is a myth, maybe it is only partly true.