

Inquiries of the Ministry

report on this matter jointly from my department and the Air Transport Board. I have just drafted a letter which I am about to send to the head of the union to explain precisely what the situation is. If I could explain it in a word, Mr. Speaker, it is that the Air Transport Board has not granted—indeed, if I could have the indulgence of the house, as an answer to the question I think it would be much better if I read this memorandum so that hon. members would know what the situation is.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Woolliams: Let us have it.

Mr. Churchill: Why did you not do it on motions? How long is it?

Mr. Pickersgill: It is about a page long. The hon. member for Bow River said that he regards this matter as one of national emergency, and I think we all regard it as a matter of great importance.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pickersgill: Therefore I do hope, sir, that I have the indulgence of the house to read this memorandum, rather than attempting to paraphrase it. I understood that the house gave their indulgence.

Some hon. Members: Read it.

Mr. Pickersgill: I hope I have that indulgence, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Starr: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—and I am agreeable that the minister should read this very important report—but I wonder whether Mr. Speaker would take note of the time so consumed and add it to the end of the question period. We should be given credit for the time taken by the minister to read this memorandum.

Mr. Speaker: I hope this will not be necessary and that questions will be ended much before the 40 minutes allotted have expired.

Mr. Pickersgill: I would probably have taken longer otherwise, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Nielsen: Read it.

Mr. Pickersgill: This is a memorandum to the minister:

Charter Air Carrier Services on Air Canada Routes.

With regard to the telegram addressed to the Prime Minister by the general vice president of the

International Association of Machinists dealing with the operations of charter air carriers over Air Canada routes, the facts are as follows.

No special government authorization and no new Air Transport Board licence or Department of Transport operating certificates have been issued for these flights since none were required. The flights are being performed under the authorization of existing licences and operating certificates which the charter carriers held as a result of applications and hearing by the Air Transport Board in past years.

These carriers are entitled to perform point-to-point charter services in accordance with the terms of their licences and operating certificates. A policy rule of the Air Transport Board provides that they may not make flights over routes which are being served by regular scheduled flights of another carrier and, under normal circumstances, this meant that they could not fly over the routes served by Air Canada.

However, the grounding of the Air Canada services as a result of the strike made this rule inapplicable.

May I interject at this point to emphasize that this was just a rule of the board and not part of the law.

It thus became possible for the charter carriers to fly between points served by Air Canada since the rule only applies in cases where services are actually being provided by the scheduled carrier.

The only change in the situation is the fact that the Air Transport Board has allowed these carriers, in accordance with the terms of their licences, to use tariffs covering unit as well as bulk charter rates. To stop them from performing the flights they are now carrying out would have meant intervention by the Air Transport Board or the Department of Transport to take away from the carriers licences and rights which they have held for a long time.

Both the Air Transport Board and the Department of Transport are keeping the situation under careful review to ensure that flights performed are carried on in accordance with the licences and operating certificates which have been issued.

This is signed by J. R. Belcher, Acting Chairman of the Air Transport Board, and J. R. Baldwin, Deputy Minister of Transport.

Hon. E. D. Fulton (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. I should like to ask the minister whether he or his colleague, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Nicholson), could clear up the question which arises from reports which indicate that the union will picket, if these chartered carriers extend their flights into areas otherwise served by Air Canada. As I say, I find this hard to credit. Can either minister give us information bearing on that question? Are these services actually being picketed or has this only been threatened?