

*Air Canada*

savings on the one hand and improved revenue by better use of aircraft on the other produced the profit.

It is indeed a substantial profit, as we will see when the final report comes before us, but not one which is in any way out of proportion. It certainly will not be an end to the challenge for Air Canada, its employees and management because there is a very large investment here. The profit will not yet look like an adequate return on capital. That is something which may over time be solved.

I did want to take this opportunity in a preliminary way to congratulate the management and all the employees of Air Canada for this job which they have done and to wish them full success in their continuing development of better air service, increased convenience for passengers and at the same time good management and good operations which produce a better profit for the long term credit of the Canadian people, the owners of the airline.

**Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) for outlining the thrust of amendments proposed in the other place and the report the government has rendered thereto.

When this bill or a version of it, Bill C-17 in the last session of the House, was first introduced, it was done with a considerable amount of urgency. Thus it is rather startling that we should still have it before us now. Just to recap, the bill was introduced in this House on October 28, 1976. It sat on the order paper until May, 1977, and was considered in this House and in committee during June and July. At that time we were told it was an absolute must to have the bill passed by summer. But in spite of the pressure and co-operation of the opposition to expedite passage, we find this bill still before us.

I wanted to point this out, particularly after watching the government House leader on "The Nation's Business" last night. He attempted to blame all the failures of the government on the opposition. He implied one of the reasons there is high unemployment is because there is a Conservative opposition. I do not know how many Canadians he expects to believe that. I just want to make the point that the fact that this bill is still before the House is certainly not our fault. It can be said that we exercised more than reasonable give and take. However, the fact it is before the House probably has some justification. I think the Senate has done a very commendable job in this instance.

My colleagues and I welcome the amendments proposed by the other place. We have no difficulty accepting the general thrust of the three substantive amendments, and certainly no problem with the others which are primarily consequential on those three.

The deletion of clause 6(2) certainly meets with our approval. The amendments to clause 17 having to do with the referral of the annual report is, as the minister pointed out, simply a change in wording, from House of Commons to parliament. The immediate tabling of any orders in council under the provisions of clauses 6 and 8 is an excellent amendment. We welcome these amendments and will certainly support them.

I continue to be perplexed by the attitude of the minister. There can be no doubt about our apprehension in committee with regard to clause 6(2). We expressed a great deal of reservation, taking exception to the wide powers that seem to be granted under the provisions of that particular clause. The minister stood firmly and said it was right with might.

We have now been treated to a new attitude of accommodation. I suppose it is because there may be an election in the air. This new attitude of accommodation can only be related to political considerations transcending everything else. The minister probably worries that he has not really achieved all that much since taking over the portfolio. I suppose he is also concerned about his new found colleague, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Horner), who seems to be breathing down his neck. He is not that once great western authority on all things ranging from marketing boards to air transportation to grain.

It is interesting to note that early in February the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, not the Minister of Transport, will be convening a meeting with the three western provincial ministers of transport. I find that very strange. They are going to be discussing some of the recommendations of the Hall report. I am not sure whether the Minister of Transport refuses to meet with his provincial counterparts or whether they refuse to meet with him. Nevertheless, it makes for very interesting contemplation. I suppose the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce finds this a rather interesting and enlightening experience in that he can do two things at the same time. He can improve his stature in western Canada and, at the same time, fight one of his old foes. These are indeed interesting developments.

Getting back to the thrust of the amendments, when dealing with this piece of legislation in committee, my colleagues and I tried to eliminate clause 6(2), albeit unsuccessfully. An amendment moved by my colleague, the hon. member for Capilano (Mr. Huntington), was defeated in the committee hearings. Quite frankly, we felt at that time that clause should have been eliminated. We still feel that way. It reads as follows:

The Governor in Council may, by order, authorize the Corporation to engage in or carry on any activities not otherwise authorized by this Act.

It is clear that these powers are very broad. This was debated at length. It appeared then and it appears now that if Air Canada wish to engage in any activities other than outlined in clause 6(1)(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), and (i) that this should be done by reference to parliament. In many respects this legislation contemplates a wholesale sell-out of the parliamentary process. The powers that are extended in clauses 6 and 8 are very broad.

When you consider the growing tendency to govern in this country by order in council, the fact that in 1976 something like 3,326 orders in council were passed and only 653 published in the *Gazette*, it clearly causes alarm and consternation to those of us who want to protect, preserve, and enhance the parliamentary process. In our view it is abuse of the order in council process, a circumvention of the parliamentary process.