

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

I ask the Secretary of State and the Minister of Justice to be very careful about people whose only aim is to destroy for the benefit of international communism.

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes I am allowed to answer the hon. member's question, obviously I cannot separate the true from the false, or the doubtful, in the allegations he has just made.

I shall therefore limit myself to answering the question itself, and say that in the light of available information, Mr. Girod or Giroux is not known at the CBC, no one knows who he is, or has ever heard of him, and there has never been any question of his being invited to Canada.

[English]

AIR TRANSPORT—FARES BASED ON CANADIAN DOLLAR
PEGGED AT 92 CENTS—PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION
FOR OVERCHARGING

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, since November 25 I have been pursuing the question of the discriminatory charging practices applied against Canadians paying international air fares in Canadian currency. I have been informed that the Canadian Transport Commission has taken action. The front page of today's *Ottawa Citizen* carries a report to this effect. It reads:

• (11:00 p.m.)

The Canadian Transport Commission announced today it will impose an exchange rate on the American dollar in terms of Canadian currency for use by all airlines in Canada, effective immediately.

This, of course, is the sort of response we wanted from the government and the CTC. It is unfortunate that the discriminatory practice was allowed to continue so long, because there is in the AITA manual on traffic conference resolutions the procedures for immediately removing this discrimination. The same procedures are set forth in the commercial air regulations. It would appear that the government's own carrier, Air Canada, has been the worst offender in this regard. Some of the publicity which it has issued indicates that the AITA has precluded the possibility of action on the matter before April, 1971. The news story, of course, refutes this. This does not settle the decision which has come almost eight months after the beginning of a discriminatory practice which began last June 1. That is when the Canadian dollar was unpegged. Since that time, Canadian passengers on international air services have been overcharged by an average of 5.63 per cent compared with passengers using American funds. If we calculate the total amount of international airline passenger revenues from May 31 to December 1, we arrive at a figure of \$110 million. This represents a loss of approximately \$4.5 million to Canadian consumers.

Yesterday I directed a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford). As he has done on several occasions when this matter has been brought to his attention, he passed the buck to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson). The Minister of Trans-

[Mr. Laprise.]

port has accepted his responsibility in this matter and obviously, through the order of the CTC, did what was necessary to remove the discriminatory practice. I suggest it is up to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, who has been very long on talk and very short on action, to assume his responsibilities in these matters.

Canadian consumers have been bilked out of a substantial sum of money. In many cases they have been older citizens who have saved all their lives for a trip back to the old country. They paid \$30 or \$40 more than necessary had the legitimate rate of exchange been applied to their fare. This matter concerns Canadian consumers. I maintain they should be compensated for the amount they have been overcharged. This also involves misleading advertising, because the air carriers, particularly Air Canada, have indicated that there is no redress under the procedures that are available. It should be pointed out that airline tickets stipulate that prices are "subject to change prior to the commencement of travel".

By the same token, air travel consumers should have countervailing protection when international currencies fluctuate. If the fluctuation in the exchange rate had meant a loss of revenue to the air carriers, they would have been the first to change their regulations accordingly. Obviously there has been collusion. It is the responsibility of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to protect the interests of consumers in this regard. I trust that the minister and the government will assume their responsibility in these matters.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Duquet (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, let me first apologize to the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) on behalf of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) who could not be here tonight to answer the hon. member's question.

Obviously, this question is of considerable import and I trust the hon. member will recognize, as he has just said, that the minister's answers have been followed by substantial action.

Representations in this regard have been made to the Minister of Transport who asked that this matter be seriously investigated. This investigation is now under way and I can assure the hon. member for Brandon-Souris that as soon as it is concluded and that the minister has received detailed information, he will immediately refer this information to the House and point out what action has been taken on this matter.

[English]

IMMIGRATION—REASONS FOR DECREASE IN NUMBER OF
CHINESE ADMITTED TO CANADA

Mr. S. Perry Ryan (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday of this week I, and not my hon. friend from Parry-Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken) as reported in the Canadian Press, asked the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Lang) whether he would explain to the House the reason for the drastic decrease in Chinese immigration to Canada, as shown by the figures for this year and last