

Aeronautics Act

concept, because there are many airports in this country and training schools are attached to airports and they bring no real income to them. Airports at training schools could be used as emergency landing fields, a sort of auxiliary field to a major airport, but they are used mainly by the training schools.

You might remember that during the war there were hundreds and hundreds of small airfields across the country which were maintained solely for the purpose of emergencies. Nobody landed on some of them for years, but they were maintained, the grass was cut, and a certain amount of gas was kept for emergency purposes. Many of these small fields were later developed into training fields, and I think this is advantageous. I believe it would be a very bad idea if we were to charge them for the use of radar and for the wages of the guy who operates the radar, because they cannot use it; it is of no value to them. In some cases we would not be able to charge them for the use of radio because they are not properly equipped, and certainly they would not be able to use the sophisticated landing devices for which other aircraft have to pay.

I suggest we should be very careful in the way we implement the user-pay concept at airports. This is particularly true with regard to the small non-government operated airports. It appears to me that the minister wishes to obtain control over those as well.

The minister is asking for powers that are not justifiable and are certainly not needed, nor is it in the best interests of the industry and of the people who are using the facilities for the minister to have such powers. While it is close to the end of the session and most hon. members want to go on holidays—

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Peters: Well, the attendance here today indicates that I am more correct than those who say no.

Mr. Goodale: Only members of the NDP have that in mind.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): We are here.

Mr. Peters: There are only a couple of airports in my riding, and one of them is a fairly good sized airport. I am sure there are other members of the House who have municipal airports in their ridings. I am sure there are a few in whose ridings there are pilot training schools. I am sure they have been shocked by the way we have conducted the inquiry into the accident that occurred in the Arctic, and by the way we have conducted the inquiry into the accident that occurred between James Bay and Timmins not long ago in which nine people were killed. I am sure that many people are shocked at the services, or lack of them, at airports.

I am sure members are well aware of the problems in their areas. I am suggesting that they are willing to give the Minister of Transport anything he wants, for two reasons. One is that there is not much they can do about it, because he will take these powers anyway. He is the most dictatorial Minister of Transport we have ever had. The other is that they want to go on their holidays and they are not greatly interested in

speaking on this subject. If I am wrong, I am sure I will hear denials from a number of members who have more at stake in this bill than I have, and who represent people who are directly concerned with this piece of legislation. I am sure that they will have something to say, so I shall sit down and let them speak.

● (1210)

Mr. J. R. Ellis (Hastings): Mr. Speaker, my interjection in this debate will be relatively brief. I intend to look at some of the clauses of the bill before I spend time on the two main portions that I am basically concerned with, one regarding investigation of accidents and one regarding licensing of proposed scheduled airports.

The hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) went into a couple of matters in considerable detail. He spent some time talking about the liability insurance clause. I have no objection to the fact that aircraft owners should have liability insurance. As an owner of many years standing I have always felt it absolutely essential, and I think anyone who does not carry it is being irresponsible. But I am concerned that the department is getting involved in this and not the CTC which would seem to be the regulatory body that should be involved.

I am also curious about the level of insurance that individuals will have to carry. It seems to me that if this is to be set arbitrarily by the department, this House should have some idea of the level before the legislation is passed.

The hon. member of Vegreville also dealt with the licensing of persons engaged in the design, manufacture, or maintenance of aircraft. In the past two decades there has been an increase in the number of home-built aircraft. These are built by very dedicated people who use their tremendous skills as machinists, carpenters, or as other types of tradesmen. They are usually built in basements, garages, backyards, or sometimes in a spare building at a small airport. These people have traditionally built very fine aircraft for their own recreation. Are they each to be separately licensed as a manufacturer under this legislation? This is something we want to find out. The same question comes up about licensing the premises on which an aircraft is manufactured. Does the department want to license the basement of a home because someone is building an airplane there? I agree that the legislation should go to committee for long and thorough examination.

A particularly interesting portion of the bill concerns the licensing of airports. The hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) mentioned that there are not many airports in his area, but he was concerned about the user-pay principle. There are only a few airports in my area but there are other places where planes land. The Flying Farmers frequently come in on a grass strip owned by one of their group. Perhaps on a Sunday afternoon a farmer invites eight or ten others in the area to land on his field; they have a barbecue, and then fly off again. Is there to be an inspection of this type of field as well as of major airports?