

Adjournment Debate

Following the accident, through stronger intervention in the affairs of Air Gaspé, as the hon. member is probably aware, the company was sold and taken over by Quebec Air. There were problems initially in the takeover and following it, but they were eventually resolved.

With respect to the technical documents on board this aircraft, the hon. member said they were all in French and the crew could only speak English. The actual fact is that flight operation documents were in English and the crew, of course, was also English speaking. The documents referred to are documents not related to flying.

In closing I should like to speak briefly on another comment made by the hon. member. I do not think he meant to leave the wrong impression, but he stated on March 17, and again today, that the report had just been released. It is my understanding from facts given to me by the staff of the MOT that the accident report was released at the end of July, 1974, which is some months ago.

AIRPORTS—REQUEST FOR DECISION TO CONSTRUCT

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Madam Speaker, on the day I asked the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) my question regarding the long delayed up-grading of the Charlottetown airport, the House had heard expressions of disapproval with regard to proceeding with the controversial Pickering airport. I then asked the minister if he would turn his attention to Prince Edward Island where a new airport is both required and desired. This is by no means the first time that I have raised with the present minister, and indeed with his predecessors, the urgency of the situation in Charlottetown, the cradle of confederation.

On April 28 Air Canada will inaugurate the service between Charlottetown and Ottawa and next to Toronto, and I trust that my fellow islander will be on that inaugural flight, just as I am looking forward to being on it.

For a good many years we have had Eastern Provincial Airways giving us a fast direct service to Montreal, and of course to cities in Atlantic Canada. EPA, of course, is very highly regarded in PEI for its leadership in this field.

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The airlines are doing their part, and EPA especially deserves commendation for its leadership in bringing us into the jet age. But the facilities at the airport are not keeping abreast of advances made by the airlines and are not keeping pace with increases in the numbers of people travelling to Prince Edward Island. Indeed the number of tourists coming to Prince Edward Island is far in excess of the total population of the province, and in the summer-time about ten to one. Needless to say, we welcome these tourists and congratulate them for their perception in choosing our province as a place for recreation and vacation.

But where I depart from this feeling of content and satisfaction, and where I feel grave concern, is in reference to the continuing inadequacy of the airport facilities, especially the passenger terminal building. We do not have sufficient seating space for passengers, and it is quite deplorable to have people forced to stand in cramped

quarters at the arrival and departure of our crowded jet aircraft from various parts of the nation, and indeed from the United States. One does not have to be an engineer, an architect or an expert to know that any terminal which has fewer seats than any one of the aircraft servicing that terminal is obviously inadequate, and because tourism is a major interest and economic factor in Prince Edward Island it is of great importance to have people enter and depart from our province in reasonable comfort.

What is needed is a swift upgrading of the plans and priorities for the Charlottetown airport. I have learned that yet another temporary addition is to be erected for this summer. What we need is not another little leanto but a permanent structure of ample size, and with facilities and furnishings to keep abreast of our growing travel flow. We need more runway space and upgraded equipment in other ways so that the whole of the airport will be brought into the jet age.

The minister's colleague, the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Jamieson), is seeking to inaugurate and strengthen policies to aid the Atlantic region. Here is an opportunity to help the Atlantic provinces to help themselves. To buttress our island tourist industry and to provide our island people with decent transportation services is a proper leadership role for the Dominion government, and I invite the government, through the minister, to take on such a role. I look forward with the greatest pleasure to hearing the parliamentary secretary announce in glowing terms what we are going to get in the weeks and months ahead.

Mr. Cliff McIsaac (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) is always a very eloquent spokesman on behalf of the needs of his province, and certainly tonight is no exception. I think the hon. member will be pleased to hear what I have to say although he may not be pleased with the rate at which some of these things will take place.

I think he will certainly admit that the Ministry of Transport officials and the federal government have been as interested as he is in providing the best possible airport facilities for all airports across the country, and certainly Charlottetown is one of those centres. As the hon. member points out, there have undoubtedly been very increased demands made on the airport space in Prince Edward Island with the growth and development of the tourist trade. The tourist season particularly creates real pressure on those facilities. For this very reason consultations with provincial authorities, air carriers and other users of the Charlottetown airport have been going on for several years with a view to improving as quickly as possible the air entrance into Prince Edward Island. I think a good and a very close relationship and exchange of information have gone on in that respect and have resulted in the decision to improve or replace the present facilities rather than relocate the airport at another site.

Our Atlantic regional officials at Moncton established a master planning project team which was charged with developing immediate and long-term-future requirements to meet aircraft movement and passenger traffic forecasts. The project team was to identify requirements for air