

Aeronautics Act

for a security record of which Canada can be proud. We must maintain it.

One other comment is that we must get this bill quickly to committee where we could have witnesses to inquire into matters such as I am raising here today, and also into other much more mundane matters affecting the territory of airports. I refer to the security fence. It is almost a dead issue. It was built half way around the airport and, despite a good many objections that were raised locally, it does nothing to increase the security of the airport in cases of hijacking because it is only half way around. I thought the whole thing had been forgotten, but then I learned last week end that one of the fields granted by the Department of Transport and the airport manager to a community group as a soccer field has now been divided down the middle by that useless fence.

I secured the permission of the minister and of the manager of the airport to have that soccer field left free so that the children of the community could have a place where they could gather on lovely days such as we have today, or even on wet days, to play soccer. Now I find that the only large area available to them for that purpose has been virtually destroyed by the building of a fence right down the middle of it.

When the bill goes to committee I will have some evidence brought forward respecting these two matters, and the power that the minister is exercising, or ought not to exercise except after he has taken into account the needs and requirements of the users of the airport.

Mr. Cecil Smith (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I believe that the last time I spoke when you were in the chair we were also talking about aircraft, only it was the transportation of parrots to Yugoslavia. However, I find that the air regulations in Canada, especially northern Manitoba, are about as obsolete and out of date as they are in Yugoslavia.

Coming from northern and central Manitoba I must point out that airports are our lifelines because we do not have road systems in the north and we depend entirely on aircraft for transportation of people to the large centres, transportation of children attending school, and transportation of food supplies to the various communities. Over the last 20 years we have seen an increase in air travel throughout northern and central Manitoba to the extent that we now have approximately ten different airlines flying in the area, some of them serving the smaller communities and others serving the larger communities such as The Pas, Flin Flon, Thompson, Churchill, and Gillam. Those are larger communities that had airports prior to 20 years ago.

However, in 1966 the then premier of Manitoba, Duff Roblin, said that on Manitoba's centennial, which was in 1970, every community of over 100 people would have an emergency airport. This would consist of a landing strip which would measure some 2,000 feet long, be approximately 350 feet wide, and would be classed as an emergency airstrip. This emergency airstrip program got under way and was nearly completed by 1970. There was an emergency airstrip in each community.

[Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich).]

We found that we had revolutionized travel in northern and central Manitoba to the extent that wheel equipped aircraft were circulating these airstrips before they were completed. Prior to the landing strips being built, aircraft only equipped with floats could land on the lakes, and aircraft equipped with skis in the winter could land on frozen lakes. They were the only means of transportation. This resulted in long periods in the spring, called break up in the north—this is the breaking up of ice—and in the fall, when aircraft could not land. In many instances the medical requirements of these communities were not available. Of course in later years helicopters were used to transport patients out to nearby hospitals. However, the airstrips in northern Manitoba have been brought up to a standard so that even the Department of Transport recognizes some of them.

The biggest problem that we are experiencing right now is that, of the 25 airports in Manitoba, the federal government will only recognize five or six. The remaining airports operate under the restrictions of the Department of Transport with regard to the size of aircraft that can use these airports, the type of licences given to these particular airports, and so on. This brings me to the point where I really feel I must speak on Bill C-40, and once it is in committee we hope there will be sufficient witnesses to bring us up to date on exactly what is happening in air transport with regard to isolated and inland areas of Canada.

Some months ago Transair sold out to Pacific Western Airlines and a portion of their company, called Midwest Aviation, was sold, or is in the process of being sold, to Perimeter Aviation of Winnipeg. What took place is a real mystery so far as other operators in Manitoba are concerned because we have people like Taylor Airways operating out of a place called Gods Lake Narrows, who have serviced that community for 15 years, not always with wheel equipped aircraft but, prior to that, with ski equipped aircraft in winter and float equipped aircraft in summer, to fly people out during emergencies, to fly trappers out to their trap lines and fishermen out to the various lakes where they fish commercially in the summer time, and also to transport their fish to the market. What has happened is that now that the Midwest portion of Transair has been sold to Perimeter Aviation there is some agreement between Perimeter Aviation, Midwest and CTC that seems to dictate that if they buy Midwest they will want all the flying rights to the northeastern portion of Manitoba which is presently being serviced not only by Taylor Airways out of Gods Lake Narrows but by St. Andrews Airways out of Island Lake. Incidentally, St. Andrews fly approximately 3,000 passengers a year out of Island Lake, St. Theresa, Wasaganac and Red Sucker. The total population of those four small communities is approximately 2,500 people.

● (1610)

The problem arises when one aircraft company wants to take over a particular area of northern and central Manitoba. The company we are talking about that is planning to do this is Winnipeg Airlines. It is based in Winnipeg, whereas Taylor Aircraft is based in the community of Gods Lake Narrows,