

Canadian National and have paid little attention to the realm of competition in any of the fields in which it operates.

Canadians are a widely travelled people. They travel across the world by car, by sea or boat, particularly people from the province of the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) who go to Mexico and to Florida. You see a great many of them driving there. Canadians travel extensively, and this is causing a great deal of difficulty in relation to the balance of payments and the economy of our country. But in relation to travel, we have been interested in watching the relationship which has happened in Britain to their national airline and to competition. It is interesting that this competition is now causing a great deal of difficulty in the United States and it is causing some difficulty in Canada as well.

Laker aircraft has been granted permission to operate flights at greatly reduced rates between Europe and North America, and this will mean that travel will cost less than 50 per cent of the normal cost of air travel between North America and Britain. Obviously, this competition will have to be met in various ways, but it is interesting that in Canada, where there are a lot of enterprising entrepreneurs, Wardair in particular, should have said it can match the Laker deal and do it without cutting away all the frills. And it will be able to provide travellers with a seat on the aircraft; they will not have to stand up all the way to Europe. They will be able to get refreshments on that trip, rather than cross in total austerity as contemplated in the low-rate Laker package.

Canadians will be obliged to develop a totally new way of handling travel, or they will have to compete. I hope Air Canada will in some way learn how to compete. The amendment before us is an indication that the government has given no consideration to this type of competition. We are talking about fares which will take one from Ottawa, Toronto or Montreal to Europe cheaper than you can go across Canada.

● (1440)

The charge is made that we are losing a great deal of money, at least in Canada, particularly in the triangle of Montreal-Ottawa-Toronto, as the previous speaker has said. Every member here knows how this can be solved easily and simply and to the advantage of the travelling public. With the volume of traffic there is between Montreal and Toronto, no airline should be operating as if it had to provide a multicarrier flight to New Zealand. A computer is not needed, nor are other frills needed on that route.

I was very impressed with the entrepreneur who started the airline between Edmonton and Calgary. You line up, you buy your ticket as you would on a bus, and you catch the flight regularly. It is a half-hour trip. The plane is utilized totally, and the line is making money. The minister should remember that it is replacing a flight that was dropped by Air Canada because it did not make any money. They do not make the usual search that you have at airports. They do not operate from the two international airports that are a few miles out of the two cities, but rather they operate from the municipal

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airports right in the cities which are easily accessible to the travelling public.

They run that service efficiently, and they move a very large number of passengers. If you are standing in line and they take 100 passengers a flight and you are the one hundred and first, you would wait for the next flight and you would be the first one on it. You cannot wait more than one hour. It is my guess that when Air Canada ran that flight, one sometimes had to wait four or five hours to get on that flight. You could either wait at the airport or you could go back to the city and make several trips back and forth before you got a seat on the flight. Now it takes much less time.

The company which runs that airline competes very successfully with local ground transportation. My case is that they are making a lot of money. Two pilots fly each plane; they do not serve coffee, and there are no frills. But an efficient service is provided. Perhaps that is the way in which we should handle transportation between short distances. The efficiency per passenger of such of flight is 150 per cent better than if you were to fill up a DC-9 to fly between the two cities. The DC-9 has about the same capacity as the plane they fly on the air base where they use a Boeing 727. That type of operation should be considered seriously by the minister. It provides a good service.

There is a matter in which the Postmaster General (Mr. Blais), I and the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) are interested. It concerns a flight between Ottawa, North Bay and Sudbury. A jet service was to be provided by a third carrier, but there was opposition from Air Canada. They won, and they put on an early morning flight which nobody took. Then they provided another flight in the middle of the afternoon which, again, nobody took. Now they have discontinued the flight. A fourth level carrier is now operating that flight with DC-3s. I think the Postmaster General would agree with me that on a Friday afternoon you need a reservation on that flight to get a seat on the plane because it is often filled to capacity.

Mr. Blais: I fully agree with the hon. gentleman.

Mr. Peters: It seems to me that that service is provided at a time when many people use it, so it fills the purpose and the airline makes money. I suggest that one of our main aims should be to provide service. Any member here can tell you that service could be improved in the triangle area of Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto. There is not a member here who could not make suggestions about better service which could make Air Canada a heck of a lot more money.

Another point that I wish to make is that a return trip to Europe is cheaper than a single fare to Vancouver. Surely hon. members should be concerned about this because many of them fly to Vancouver regularly, perhaps once a week, and they are aware of the difference in cost. Surely the cost of domestic flights should be reduced.

I suggest that if we pass this bill without amendments, we will be duplicating what CNR has done, as has been said here before. We would not only be asking Air Canada to run an