

AIR CANADA—WINNIPEG—TRANSFER OF  
BASE TO NORTHWEST INDUSTRIES LTD.

**Mr. Ed Schreyer (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, many people probably have the impression that the people of Winnipeg are resentful and jealous of the people of Montreal because Montreal has had the good luck to have Air Canada expand its jet overhaul facilities at Dorval and also has succeeded in obtaining an effective international airport at Ste. Scholastique just a few miles away. If people have that impression, I suggest they have missed the point. What the people of Winnipeg resent very much is not that something has been taken from Winnipeg and placed in Montreal; what is resented above all is the fact that in all the inquiries that have been made over the past years in an attempt to find justification for Air Canada taking its jet overhaul plant out of Winnipeg there has been a long and sad history of deception.

The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Osler), who is a colleague of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) who I presume will be answering, has himself used words to the effect that the executives of Air Canada in testifying at the Thompson inquiry, for example, were lying—I repeat “lying”. It is precisely the use of that kind of word that I want to endorse. I want the minister, or whoever is responsible for his department at the present time, to give some good reason why there should not be an inquiry into the testimony given by the Air Canada officials in an attempt to find out whether their testimony was accurate and truthfully given. I wish to state, as categorically and as truthfully as I can, that after going through the evidence of the Thompson inquiry and after having received from the Department of Transport an order for return only a few weeks ago, I find there is a contradiction between the words used by the executives of Air Canada before the inquiry commission and the information received through the order for return.

● (10:10 p.m.)

This is a clear indication that there has been a deception perpetrated on the people of Canada, the people of Winnipeg and the people of Manitoba by those officers who hold positions of responsibility with this Crown corporation, namely Air Canada.

In addition to the economic effect all this has had on Winnipeg and the western part of Canada, there is something equally important and sinister about it. It is indeed foreboding if we cannot, as members of parliament, be

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

absolutely confident in the high-ranking civil servants we employ. Let me suggest that no administrative official in the United States would dare give the kind of misinformation to members of Congress that has been given to members of parliament in Canada by officials of Air Canada.

What I should like to hear from whoever is in a responsible position in the Department of Transport at this time is an indication as to why there should not be some kind of full inquiry into this whole sorry episode resulting from the testimony given by Air Canada officials to the Thompson commission. Some explanation should be given to reconcile this testimony with the information included in the order for return tabled in this house a few weeks ago.

In concluding, I want to say that all these charges of deception revolve around certain facts, given in 1964 when Air Canada spokesmen were testifying before the Thompson inquiry. At that time they said the main reason the jet overhaul base should be pulled out of Winnipeg and transferred to Montreal was that the Dorval facilities were not being utilized, and that it was uneconomic to maintain the two plants. Within a very short period of time steps were being taken to ask the Treasury Board to approve amounts to institute a multi-million dollar extension of the facilities at Dorval. This request amounted to some \$20 million to \$30 million. That was the magnitude of the extension to the jet overhaul plant facilities at Dorval.

A few short months before Air Canada asked for money to extend the facilities, officials of this corporation were saying to this inquiry commission that the plant in Montreal was being utilized to half its capability and was therefore uneconomical; that it was necessary to close down the plant at Winnipeg. It is impossible to reconcile that testimony with what has transpired since then.

Even though it is easy to say in retrospect that this was not the case, there is sufficient evidence to convince many of my colleagues including the hon. members for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Osler), Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) and anybody else from almost any other part of Canada, that we cannot be completely confident of the evidence given by these officials to the committee. There is sufficient evidence to raise a doubt as to the veracity of the statements made by these senior officials of this Crown corporation.