

minister hopes to make the details of this agreement public within the next few days.

Personally, I really sympathize with the people who still depend on that service. I agree that a four-week notice of the permanent interruption of a service given for many years is too short.

I take note of the request of the hon. member for an extension, or the temporary continuation of that service as suggested by the hon. member for Laval (Mr. Roy), and shall inform the minister accordingly without delay.

[English]

AIR SAFETY—ENFORCEMENT OF REGULATIONS RESPECTING AIRCRAFT AND PILOTS

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg-Assiniboine): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking tonight about the daily horror stories we are hearing from the Judge Dubin case inquiry. It would appear that flying in Canada today is like playing Russian roulette, and I hope the parliamentary secretary who answers tonight on behalf of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) will give a firm commitment on the updating of equipment in control towers at airports across Canada. I also want to hear about a timetable and the amount allotted.

It is very interesting to observe that the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) is sitting in the House tonight. I hope we are not having any difficulty obtaining funds from him for updating all the ancient equipment in our control towers across Canada. The public is entitled to a firm commitment from the minister, not a bureaucratic answer. I hope the parliamentary secretary has not brought one with him tonight, prepared by officials in the department that is under investigation.

● (2210)

When I read some of the stories which have been coming out of the Dubin inquiry, Mr. Speaker, it makes my hair stand on end. Here are some of the latest statements:

Inaccurate weather forecasting and stringent landing clearances make it tougher to fly planes in Canada than in the United States, an Air Canada captain said Monday.

Charles Burbank told the Dubin inquiry into aviation safety that weather forecasting in Canada "has gone downhill the last few years," and this has added to the frustration of private and commercial pilots.

Here is a further statement from the Dubin inquiry, as reported in *The Citizen* on January 15, 1980, under the heading "Air safety setup in 'shambles,' inspectors say." It states:

Canada's air safety monitoring system is "loose, arbitrary, hobbled by precedents and badly needs overhaul," according to Transport Canada's civil aviation inspectors.

The inspectors, whose job it is to enforce air safety, made the comments in a brief presented today to the federal aviation safety inquiry headed by Justice Charles Dubin.

The system is in such a shambles, the brief maintains, that Transport Canada is unable to determine even whether Canadian aircraft are airworthy.

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Those are very damaging statements. A further story emanating from the Dubin inquiry, this time coming out of Edmonton, says:

The federal government is to blame for most safety problems at airports without air traffic controllers because it won't spend money on modern equipment—

It is unbelievable that we are not maintaining a proper standard of safety in our control towers in Canada.

In a brief to the inquiry the Canadian Air Line Pilots Association said:

—many problems at small, uncontrolled airports are caused by outdated and unserviceable equipment.

"—the infrastructure required for the efficient, effective and safe operations of commercial aircraft in Canada has not kept pace with the rapid increase in aircraft numbers and aircraft performance," said the association.

I hope the association will keep up their pressure. They will certainly receive my support here in the House of Commons.

Here is a further statement out of Edmonton under the heading "Inquiry told pilots short on training". It says:

New commercial pilots don't get enough training in Canada to be considered safe, a federal inquiry into aviation safety in Canada was told Wednesday.

The Northern Air Transport Association, which represents about 90 per cent of the commercial carriers in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, told the Dubin inquiry major airlines often refuse to hire new pilots.

"It is therefore left to the rest of the commercial aviation industry to hire these new pilots, train them and employ them as they gain experience," the association said.

I wish to point out that the Dubin inquiry has not completed its investigation. It is to be wrapped up very shortly. But there is no way we can wait for it to finish its hearings and for the report to be published and for the minister, months down the road, to take a look at the results. He has to give a commitment now, tonight, that some firm action is forthcoming to update the equipment in the control towers and that moneys will be allotted to update that equipment. We are not looking for general statements and the big happy smile we usually get from the Minister of Transport when we raise these issues in the House of Commons.

Another report, this time from Calgary, said:

Aviation spokesmen have called for better training of private pilots in the face of an increasing number of aircraft accidents in Alberta.

There were 48 aircraft accidents in the province to the end of May—five of them involving fatalities—compared with 42 in the first five months of last year.

This is a disaster situation, Mr. Speaker. Another report today, from the *The Globe and Mail*, entitled "Downed-aircraft locators called \$4.25 million gaffe"—and I hope the department that caused this goof has not prepared the answer which the parliamentary secretary is going to read out here tonight—said:

Six years after being told to do so, and after spending \$4.25 million, Canada's general aviation community is using an emergency life-saving device that is nearly useless.

● (2215)

I want a political answer tonight, not a bureaucratic answer prepared by a civil servant. We want a firm commitment from the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) and the government.