

Mr. Murta: In view of the fact that Transair Limited of Winnipeg has been denied the opportunity to compete with Northwest Airlines Incorporated of St. Paul, Minnesota, on the Winnipeg-Minneapolis route, and in view of the fact this perpetuates Manitoba's dependence on United States carriers, will the minister do more than simply look into this? Will he work on behalf of Manitoba by competing for these economically beneficial routes which would certainly help the province?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): This is a matter which is related to the bilateral agreement with the United States which has not yet been ratified either by Washington or by Ottawa.

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AGRICULTURE

FERTILIZER—ALLEGED SHORTAGE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. G. H. Whittaker (Okanagan Boundary): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Last Thursday the minister stated that the fertilizer association had told him there was no shortage of fertilizer in Canada. In view of the fact that farmers in the Okanagan Valley are presently short 1,000 tons of fertilizer, with no commitments received from the manufacturers, would the hon. gentleman cause an investigation to be made into the shortage of fertilizer in British Columbia?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): We have already finalized our meetings with the fertilizer manufacturers. I am asking for reports on fertilizer shortages and tracing these shortages down. We had found none up to the time I entered the House.

Mr. Whittaker: It is the users and distributors of fertilizers that are short and the manufacturers are not entering into any commitments with them. Would the minister check with the users and the distributors and carry out an investigation of the shortage in British Columbia?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I assume that is a representation. The hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore might be allowed at this point to return to his earlier question to see whether a reply is forthcoming.

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COMMUNICATIONS

BELL APPLICATION B—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE NO APPROVAL PRIOR TO HEARING

Mr. Terry Grier (Toronto-Lakeshore): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Minister of Communications is: In view of the fact that Bell Canada is currently installing equipment which can only become operational upon the approval of Application B which is shortly to go before the CTC, is the hon. gentleman in a position to assure the House that Bell Canada has not in fact received any prior indication that this portion of its application will in fact be approved?

Oral Questions

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Minister of Communications): Apologizing for my absentmindedness a few moments ago, I think I can give such an assurance to the hon. member.

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AIR TRANSPORT

BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON ROUTES WITH UNITED STATES—POSSIBLE CONCESSIONS—REQUEST FOR PROTECTION OF CANADA'S CHARTER POSITION

Mr. Elmer MacKay (Central Nova): I have a supplementary to the question asked by the hon. member for Lisgar. In light of the statement made by the Minister of Transport yesterday to the effect that Canada will have to make concessions in relation to the air agreement with the United States, can the hon. gentleman briefly indicate the nature of those concessions or tell us when he will be doing so?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Of course not, Mr. Speaker. Negotiations are being carried on right now and I do not intend to say what kind of concessions are going to be made.

Mr. MacKay: Keeping in mind that the air charter routes are more beneficial than direct routes because of present traffic patterns, will the minister assure us he will stick to his guns and commit himself firmly to hard negotiations affecting Canada's charter position?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Again, the hon. member has made a representation. We might try to allow two or three quick questions before the end of the question period. The hon. member for Assiniboia has a supplementary, I believe.

● (1510)

BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON ROUTES WITH UNITED STATES—POSSIBLE RENEGOTIATION OF ONE ROUTE FOR SASKATCHEWAN

Mr. Bill Knight (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Minister of Transport. In view of the fact that in the negotiations regarding air routes with the United States the province of Saskatchewan was entirely left out in terms of any north-south routes, and in view of the fact the Attorney General of the province of Saskatchewan has tabled with the minister a complete economic study showing why these routes would be feasible, would the minister inform the House whether he has taken it upon himself to attempt to renegotiate at least one route for the province of Saskatchewan, either from Saskatoon or Regina?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have been briefed by the government of Saskatchewan on this and it is something we are now studying, but to relate the whole negotiations to that particular aspect is quite difficult at this moment.