

*Suggested New Brunswick Airport Complex*

has quarrelled recently with the regional air policy of this government and has said there should be greater clarification.

Another question is whether STOL aircraft might be used in intercity communication, considering the unique problem we have between these three major cities. Cut-backs have been severe. In the last three years the Air Canada service has deteriorated. They are bringing larger flights and there is no intercity communication. I do not know what the future of Air Canada is or should be. The larger planes have a different load factor for air cargo and this is seriously hampering the air cargo business in Saint John. These are the questions raised.

My proposal is that in view of the different studies, information and reports available there should be a fully co-ordinated review conducted by the Department of Transport. This should take into consideration the future of the Saint John airport in relation to the whole air picture of southern New Brunswick. It should include an assessment of the regional air carrier policy at all levels of government, provincial and federal. It should take into account the responsibilities of Air Canada and EPA and any other individual regional air carriers in existence.

These are my ideas, Mr. Speaker, and I do not apologize for bringing this matter forward. I hope it will at least provoke discussion about regional air policy. I have mentioned the history of the matter and our problems in southern New Brunswick, but I have not mentioned a particular location. I feel this is the only way we will take a step into the future of the fast-moving, jet age. There must be a need for specialized service and the other propositions outlined in my resolution.

I hope hon. members will show interest in this question and that there will be a favourable reply from the government indicating their interest and an assurance to the House that they will move on this problem that is adversely affecting our airports which do not have all the ingredients of some of our larger cities.

• (5:10 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Cyr (Gaspé):** Mr. Speaker, I should like in the first place to congratulate the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster (Mr. Bell) for having introduced a motion providing that the government should consider the advisability of setting up a new regional airport in New Brunswick.

It is quite difficult to speak about transportation in New Brunswick without referring to the Gaspé peninsula, eastern Quebec area, including the area north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Several committees have made studies in the past and presented reports on the means of transport in the Maritimes and have always referred to the needs of eastern Quebec and the Gaspé peninsula.

During the few minutes at my disposal, it would be quite difficult for me to consider all the aspects of the problem of air transport.

[Mr. Bell.]

Transport plays a quite important role in the economic development of a remote area and for New Brunswick as for the Gaspé peninsula, the air transport system will have very important direct effects on regional economic expansion.

Any investment in or any improvement of the air transport system in eastern Canada would certainly and necessarily result in an increase of regional production and creation of new industries.

The infrastructure is the basic element of the system, for without it, most, if not all, of the means of the transport cannot operate. Whether certain means of transport exist or not, regional producers and consumers will be more or less capable of having their goods carried.

The lack of modern air transport may result in a producer or manufacturer being forced to use an inadequate means of transport. Furthermore, when a monopolistic situation exists, this can incite the carrier to profit by the market that he controls, and to increase the rates that he charges his customers.

It is with this in mind that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) must see to it that a regional airport system is developed in New Brunswick and in the whole of eastern Canada, including the Gaspé region.

It would be useful to know to what extent the presence or absence of infrastructure affects the cost of transportation and, eventually, the economic development of a region.

When roads are bad, truckers may be tempted to raise their prices, either because the upkeep of their vehicles becomes more costly or because they use other routes which makes their trips longer and more expensive.

There is a relation between traffic density and the conditions of the infrastructure.

Not only should the existing airports be improved but the possibility of building new regional and local airports should be considered.

Because of its relation to all economic activity and the real part it can play in the economic development of a region, air transport constitutes one of the sectors that governments may readily use within the framework of their regional development and economic expansion policy.

That, Mr. Speaker, is why I am suggesting to the Minister of Transport that those policies should have positive effects both on the organization of the transportation system and the economy of the region.

Should an illustration of the benefits a region can derive from an airport be needed, the following should be sufficient. Ten years ago, an industrial complex was set up near the airport in Manchester, New Hampshire. It is almost 100 per cent occupied. They are now looking for other available land. There has been investments of \$10 million, and hundreds of jobs were created for the city because of the availability of a regional airport flanked by an adjacent industrial complex.

And if New Brunswick, like the Gaspé peninsula, lacks adequate airports, what then?