

Adjournment Debate

figures to which the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Knight) referred when he spoke of the numbers of cars having gone from 88,000 to 48,000 are, of course, basically accurate in terms of the available boxcars but they ignore the fundamental fact which he should take into account if he wishes to make a full argument, namely, that many other cars of a specialized nature have been put to service to replace the boxcars which were used in the old days, the hopper cars and the specialized cars now in place. The point is that the grain car fleet is deteriorating; that is one of the reasons we put into the Prairies 2,000 hopper cars for the great benefit of the prairie grain farmer.

The hon. member for Assiniboia and his colleagues do a great disservice to the grain industry and to farmers generally when they criticize us for having put those 2,000 cars in place. They seem to ignore the fact that at present we have requests from the Canadian Wheat Board, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and many other organizations to do again what we did before. The hon. member should ask himself: If he were to direct cars into the grain movement, from which of his colleagues in the House, or from which other members in the House would he get them? Is he going to take them from the lumber movement in British Columbia, where one of his colleagues is frequently screaming about cars; or from the potash movement? The fact is there are more cars in the potash movement today than there were a year ago.

The economy is booming and there is pressure on our railway situation. This is compounded by the fact that our boxcar fleet is deteriorating. That is one of the reasons we bought hopper cars and studied the transportation system. The fact is that there is a large number of cars in the grain movement; and we have been careful to urge the railways to put in more. There is no point in suggesting, in this connection, that we do something about nationalizing the CPR. The problem is the same on the CNR. Both are trying to move the grain. Stocks are a little low at Vancouver and Thunder Bay, but in both places they have gone up since the strike ended. We will not let up in our efforts but will continue, as we have in the past, to do everything in our power to make the transportation system work better for every individual farmer.

AIR CANADA—REQUEST THAT CANADIAN AEROSPACE
INDUSTRY BE CONSIDERED IN PURCHASE OF NEW
PLANES

Mr. Reg Stackhouse (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, on October 31 I asked the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) a question, and I am very glad to have the chance to debate it tonight with his very distinguished parliamentary secretary. The question was about Air Canada's plans to purchase aircraft which involve much less Canadian content, in terms of materials and labour, than the Douglas aircraft it has been using. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this matter further because of the imperative need to give priority to Canadian-based members of the aircraft industry.

If the industry is to survive in this country, opportunities for contracts must go first to companies creating jobs for Canadians and contributing to Canada's growth. An example is the Douglas Aircraft Company of Canada. It employs 5,200 people in the metro Toronto area, and twice

[Mr. Lang.]

since 1965 has had as many as 7,200 on its strength. Its weekly payroll in Toronto is \$1 million. Since 1965, the Canadian-made material it exported exceeded what it imported by \$258 million. Every DC-9 that is purchased in Canada includes \$400,000 worth of Canadian goods. Every DC-10 includes \$1.2 million worth. Of the total material required for a DC-9, a substantial amount is manufactured in Toronto. It includes wings, tail sections, sections of fuselage, and floors. The company uses 1,100 Canadian suppliers from Nova Scotia to British Columbia, all of them creating jobs for their fellow citizens and adding vitality to our free enterprise economy.

The point at issue is not that the government or any Crown corporation such as Air Canada has an obligation to this, or any other company. The point is that the government and its Crown corporations have an obligation to Canadian workers and suppliers. They have an obligation to keep the aircraft industry viable as a Canadian enterprise. They are not fulfilling that obligation now. Instead, they are giving contracts to companies which have few Canadian employees and which purchase very small quantities of Canadian goods. At a time when the government is preaching economic nationalism, it is practising economic continentalism. In its legislation it says "Canada first"; in its contracts it says "Canada maybe".

I am not saying the government and its Crown corporations should not be free to purchase the aircraft they believe meet their needs best. But I do claim they should insist that companies meet a minimum standard of Canadian content in materials and labour. That minimum should be either directly included in the product itself or some other equivalent.

In Australia, all offshore purchases must guarantee there is a 30 per cent Australian content either in the product itself or in some offsetting equivalent. When is the Canadian government going to demand something like that? When is it going to protect the interests of its own people as it should? In his answer on October 31, the minister said:

Whatever type of aircraft Air Canada is going to buy we shall see there is some economic benefit to Canada.

If that is true, let him show us in terms of jobs and materials. There is now a real danger that a major employer in the Toronto area will be affected and numbers of workers deprived of their jobs. This affects not only the company concerned but all the suppliers and providers of services which are related to that company.

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How will this be of benefit to Canada? Saying that work has been provided elsewhere does not answer the question. Toronto people are Canadians too, which is sometimes forgotten in this House, and they have every right to have their economic future safeguarded. It is one thing for an agency like the CRTC to suggest that there should be 50 per cent Canadian content on certain radio and television programs. Do we not need the same kind of policy to apply to industry so far as we would be able to carry it out?

I suggest that we must give priority consideration to those industries which are creating jobs for Canadians. They do, after all, ultimately supply the dollars with which we buy goods. At a time when unemployment