

Canadian Aviation Safety Board

those between the air administration employees and its management. Hopefully restructuring of that organization will result in better employee relations and a better opportunity for employees to have meaningful consultation with management on matters which affect air safety and that of transportation in general. Those relations must be improved, and there is really no visible public indication at this point in time that that kind of improvement is under way.

● (1200)

It is critically important that along with this legislation air transport administration, employee relations and the mechanisms for providing advisory input be strengthened and improved. I would just use an example of one area of which the Minister and many others are aware. It stems from the Cranbrook crash which has been discussed at length by government and involves a litany of errors. I think that maybe even Mr. Justice Dubin erred in recommending that positive control of vehicles on the runway be given to flight radio operators. These people are dealing with vehicles on runways at remote airports. They could be hundreds of miles away. They are also faced with controlling vehicles in areas where they cannot see the runway. Individuals have come forward and reported errors and in some places disciplinary action has been taken. They have asked for provisions in their contract that would protect them, and if the tapes are searched and errors found, that they be used for improving operational standards rather than disciplinary action. At some point in the day, I think the Minister should comment on these peripheral matters that are important to air safety.

Just before I conclude I would like to comment on some of the other occurrences in general aviation that disturb me. I wonder if this is not part of the mechanism by which the Government is trying to improve air safety, and that is by driving people out of aviation. I am very concerned about the move that I see toward dramatically increasing costs and restrictions on flying which I do not think will particularly increase safety. It is incumbent upon the Government to show where its proposals will increase safety.

I recently had an opportunity to peruse a document released by a senior official of the Department of Transport which listed a number of recommendations about restraining private and general aviation. The rationale for so doing was the Dubin Report. In all honesty, some of the recommendations were solid but in other areas they were not. The additional restrictions and constraints would simply result in driving up the cost of aviation and driving people out of the business.

I would like to give some recent examples. Parking fees have become absolutely astronomical. The Government argues that it is doing a cost recovery program, but it drove virtually every private aircraft out of the Port Hardy airport. They have all moved away and people have sold off their aircraft and have ceased becoming involved in flying any more. What revenue there has been lost. My thought is that maybe it is simply

reducing the number of people flying and therefore the potential for accidents is being removed.

There is also a monopoly involving fuel costs at airports. It is time there was an inquiry into how ordinary 80-octane and 100-octane gas for airplanes, which is virtually the equivalent to regular unleaded gas at the service station, can cost in excess of 60 cents a litre. It is just ridiculous. Maybe we should be considering the manner in which those concessions are granted and those prices arrived at airports, because it is driving people out of aviation. It will certainly reduce the number of accidents if people do not or cannot fly.

Radio licensing, a complete aggravation, has increased 100 per cent with absolutely no rationale for so doing.

Mr. Fulton: Was it the six and five?

Mr. Skelly: No, the six and five is a matter with which we can deal later.

Mr. Pepin: That's before six and five.

Mr. Skelly: Concerning occupational training, there are many people who are still interested in becoming pilots, air crew and whatnot. However, the cost of occupational training is astronomical. To obtain a private licence costs in the order of \$3,500. God knows what a full 200 hours of flying time to obtain a commercial licence is worth. If one wants 40 more hours for an instrument rating or one wants to obtain an ATR or senior commercial licence, it is beyond the reach of most people, yet the Government moved not too long ago to restrict the claiming of a deduction on income tax. It is quite prepared to put up student loans and facilitate, to whatever degree, other training programs, but it does not provide a reasonable opportunity for the people who want to pursue a career in aviation. The expense is beyond belief and simple assistance with income tax to bona fide individuals pursuing that field would be useful.

Mr. Pepin: Some of those fees have not been increased for 30 years.

Mr. Skelly: Some of those fees have not been increased for 30 years, the Minister says, but there have been dramatic increases. If there is any doubt about it, I would be more than pleased to show him concrete examples of where the increases in fees have driven people out of aviation, and these increases are simply not justified.

I would simply be very cautious to ensure that there is a great deal of consultation about the way in which restrictions are placed on the flying public, because I am certain that it is not the intention of the Government to drive people out of aviation. There is an argument for cost recovery. There is an argument for restrictions on certain kinds of activities. However, this must be carefully considered because people are being driven out today in, I would say, record numbers.

Mr. Pepin: The total cost recovery is 5 per cent to 10 per cent.

Mr. Skelly: I hope the Minister has a chance to respond just before the Bill goes through. There have been some very