

Inquiries of the Ministry

am assured that this is not the case. However, I would consider getting in touch with Mr. Decarie, who in his television statement of last night did not say that the government issued this kind of threat at all. I think this should be carefully noted.

AIR CANADA**SUGGESTED INTERVENTION BY
FEDERAL MEDIATOR**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Bow River): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the question put by the leader of the New Democratic Party I should like to ask the Minister of Labour the present position and condition in reference to the Air Canada strike. Has a mediator been appointed; are the government going to appoint a federal mediator, or are they just going to allow this matter to lie dormant, in spite of the emergency?

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, my information is that the members of the bargaining committee for the employees of Air Canada have been communicating with their local groups with a view to ascertaining their views. As I said yesterday, if either of the parties were to approach the government the matter will be given prompt consideration, but for the government to intervene when these people are still exchanging views would be, I think, the wrong thing to do at this time.

Mr. Woolliams: A supplementary question. Do I take it from the reply of the Minister of Labour that the government's position is that they are going to wait until they are approached by either side before taking any steps?

Mr. Nicholson: For the time being, Mr. Speaker. We are still waiting for reports or requests for assistance.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Labour. In view of the fact that both the president of the machinists union and the general manager of Air Canada indicated on C.B.C.-TV that they would be quite prepared to have the federal government initiate mediation by the appointment of a mediator; and in view of the fact that public interest is certainly affected in this matter, may I ask the minister why the government does not take the initiative and appoint a government mediator?

[Mr. Benson.]

Mr. Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I gave the reasons for our position yesterday. It is quite true that one of the parties might be anxious to have the government intervene by appointing a mediator, but, until the situation which has developed within the last few days as a result of the exchange of correspondence, about which I am sure most hon. members have heard, has resolved itself, I think it would be better for matters to settle down a little and for the government to get a direct request for intervention from one or the other, or preferably from both parties before it decides to intervene.

Mr. Eric A. Winkler (Grey-Bruce): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Labour. I should like to ask him whether he has been requested by either side in the dispute to stay out of the field of mediation at this time?

Mr. Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I have had no such direct request. I have seen or heard reference to it in the news media, but no such request has been directed to me.

AIR TRANSPORT**LICENSING OF OTHER AIR CARRIERS DURING
STRIKE OF AIR CANADA PERSONNEL**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. E. D. Fulton (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. In fairness to the union concerned I think this matter should be cleared up. Is the minister in a position to give us any information on reports that have appeared in the press, which I must say I find hard to accept, that the union has given notice that if any other air lines are granted temporary authority by the Air Transport Board to give service on routes normally served by Air Canada and which at the present time are discontinued, the union will picket and make it impossible for this service to be given? This is the report that has appeared in the press, and I think that in fairness the matter should be cleared up. I wonder whether the minister is in a position to give us any information in this regard.

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): I will have to refer this question to the Minister of Transport, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): As a matter of fact, one telegram was sent to the chairman of the Air Transport Board and another to the Prime Minister, by the head of the union. I have received a