

Oral Questions

Government has decided to sacrifice the grape producers and wine producers on the altar of the free trade deal with the United States. That is what has happened.

Howard Staff, a grape grower in the Niagara Peninsula, said recently: "Everyone has been gearing up in this industry, replanting and expanding, and suddenly the umpire has called us out. They changed the rules in the third inning and we didn't even know it."

Since the deal has devastated this industry, does the Government plan to introduce a compensation package for all of those thousands of people who will lose their livelihood as a result of the trade deal? When will the Government announce the contents of that particular package?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, if there is any umpire involved in this situation the umpire is the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the GATT organization to which this country has belonged since its inception. We are proud supporters of GATT.

When this country adopts practices that are contrary to the GATT rules, the rules that govern civilized international trade, then we have to comply. That is who the umpire is. We are going to act to assist the grape industry.

I would recommend to the hon. gentleman that he read an article by Mr. George Bain in *The Halifax-Chronicle Herald* that deals with a matter he brought up about a week ago which throws a lot of light on some other sensational approach that he tried a week or 10 days ago.

* * *

AIR SAFETY**1985 GANDER AIR DISASTER—REPORT OF POSSIBLE EXPLOSION PRECEDING CRASH**

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago I questioned the Minister of Transport regarding the preliminary report of the Canadian Aviation Safety Board into the 1985 Gander air crash which killed 258 people. I pointed out that the autopsy report, which suggested that perhaps there was a fire on board the aircraft before it crashed, was not included in any part of that preliminary report.

Is the Minister aware of a report by Irving Pinkel Associates of California, explosives experts, which outlines the possibility that "an explosion tore a piece of the fuselage free prior to crash impact and that it was ingested by number 3 engine". Is the Minister aware of that report? Is he aware that none of that was included in the preliminary report of the Aviation Safety Board?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, what I am aware of is that the answer today has to be the same as the one I gave two weeks ago. My friend knows

very well that this report in December was a preliminary report. He said that himself. It has to be provided to the parties for their comments. When we have those comments, and when the final report is issued, I think at that time it would be wise for the Minister to make comments if he has any to make. In the meantime I believe that it is better to wait for the final report of the CASB.

CANADIAN AVIATION SAFETY BOARD

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago I also suggested that perhaps the Government should investigate the investigators. Little did I know that that is exactly what the Government has done.

I ask the Minister of Transport is he aware of a report dated a couple of months ago, February 3, written by a Mr. John Sopinka, Q.C., in which he states he was retained as a consultant by the Minister of Transport, and that the board members of the Canadian Aviation Safety Board which inspected the crash "have been unable to obtain investigation of facts which they consider essential in order to carry out their function."

Is he also aware that the investigators themselves have been called into question, along with their competence, and the quality of their investigations? Is the Minister aware of that outright condemnation of the board that investigated the Gander crash? If he is, is he now prepared to order a completely new investigation into the Gander air disaster?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, my friend knows I never comment on that type of document. He knows very well why I do not.

What I can say is that the Canadian Aviation Safety Board is an independent body. My friend knows that it is not the role of the Minister of Transport to take over its responsibilities.

The Hon. Member also knows that shortly I will introduce a Bill in the House dealing with accident investigation and the different modes of transportation. At that time I think it will be possible to correct some ambiguity we may have in the actual Act. We are dealing with the Canadian Aviation Safety Board. But in the meantime I repeat that it would not be relevant for the Minister to comment on the operations of what we call an independent body.

* * *

• (1440)

AIR TRANSPORT**SAFETY INSPECTIONS OF AIRCRAFT**

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. In light of the middle of the night wire story from the senior person in charge of inspections in his Department that the airlines in