

*Air Canada*

is similar in nature to the one provided to me by the former parliamentary secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp), the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid) on February 19 at page 3362 of *Hansard* when I requested copies of all Air Canada documents relating to an Air Canada contract. The hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River at that time pointed out the following:

The Air Canada contract contains considerable confidential information relating to the organization, operation and maintenance of the Air Canada lines. Air Canada's competitors are not obliged to provide such information or expose their contractual arrangements to similar scrutiny. To place Air Canada in such a disadvantageous position would not be in the public interest.

The fact of the matter is that upon further investigation this contract was found to be available at the public archives, and when we proceeded with the debate, the hon. member for Battleford-Kindersley agreed to table the documents, having regard to the fact that I had already procured a major portion of them. However, I think it is of significance to note some extracts of his speech because I think the feeling he has expressed is shared by many hon. members that the parliamentary secretary does exercise good judgment, and I am sure many hon. members will agree with the statement he made in response to my request for this documentation. At page 5606 of *Hansard* he stated, and I quote:

I do not mind telling the hon. member that I agree in a general way with the spirit of his remarks. Some of the problem and perhaps misunderstanding with regard to Air Canada and other Crown corporations could be prevented if there were more agreements to the kind of request made by the hon. member. There is no reason, in my mind, why there should be any tremendous security surrounding Crown corporations such as Air Canada.

I could not agree with that statement more. It would be very interesting to know then how the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River could justify making the remarks he did. The sort of approach the government takes is all part of a formality. It seems to be a form of stereotyped ploy to shroud Air Canada in a cloak of secrecy.

There have been many other motions of this nature. I will not take the time of the House to go into them, but they have been of a similar nature asking for pertinent and important information regarding the operations of this Crown corporation, its management, and some of its dealings, which have been somewhat suspicious, but in every case the government has treated hon. members in the same cavalier manner.

The hon. member for Battleford-Kindersley, in response to my request for this information stated, and I quote: "Air Canada believes this information should not be made public for competitive reasons." I ask, Mr. Speaker, competition with whom? We all know that Air Canada is in a monopoly position in providing Air Transportation services in this country. We all know that there is no price competition per se between Air Canada and CP Air. We know that from the hearings which took place at the CTC here just a few months ago, so what is all this ballyhoo about competition? Even if it was a matter of competition, should the public interest not prevail in a matter which is so important and where there is a shroud of suspicion involving some very questionable dealings? Surely when suspicions and suggestions of wrongdoing, such as have been advanced in this particular transaction, are brought into the fore it is mandatory that the government exercise

its responsibility and encourage and, indeed, persuade this Crown corporation to provide the information to which we as members of parliament and the public are rightly entitled. We know that Air Canada's position is such that it refuses to give the information because it considers it to be proprietary and not in the interests of the airline, but what is the position of the government? It obviously must agree with the position that this kind of information should be suppressed.

When the parliamentary secretary rises to respond, I hope he will tell us why the government sees fit to concur with this position. Surely under the provisions of the Financial Administration Act the government is ultimately responsible for the conduct of its Crown corporations? Surely the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) is also responsible for accounting to the country through parliament. If the government is a party to this suppression of information, who is it trying to protect? Parliament is justified in demanding to know what is going on inside this corporation. We are entitled to know the details of some of the Mickey Mouse transactions which have been taking place within Air Canada, if we are to make a valid assessment and judgment of the operations of the upper echelons of its management.

This particular transaction raises many questions. The central figure involved in this transaction is a gentleman by the name of Mr. Yves Ménard, who was the vice president of marketing. Mr. Ménard has resigned. We do not know whether that was for personal reasons or whether it was because of a blatant conflict of interest. We do not know whether it was because he overstepped the bounds of his authority. We do not know whether he was the victim of other instances of mismanagement or whether it was simply sloppy administration on the part of the gang at the top. It is interesting to note that the chief executive officer of the airline, Mr. Yves Pratte, said that he regretted the circumstances surrounding Mr. Ménard's departure and indicated that he would be sorely missed.

● (1750)

We are all aware of what transpired thereafter. The Estey inquiry was set up, but to date we have had no report although we suspect it is in the minister's hands. We do not know why we have not heard about it and I hope the parliamentary secretary can offer us some explanation. Surely a matter as important as this should receive immediate attention. It cannot simply be a matter of the translation because the government had no difficulty with the translation of the documents relating to the anti-inflationary program. The Minister of Transport has offered us nothing but excuses in this regard.

We now find Mr. Menard's name linked with the Sky Shops affair. This is another issue which was brought to the surface by the hon. member for Central Nova (Mr. MacKay). We are getting the run-around. Who is in control of this corporation? Who is ultimately responsible for carrying out the operations of this major airline? Whoever it is has failed to exercise their mandate in a proper and orderly fashion.

Let us look at the background of the issue, Mr. Speaker. On February 28, 1975, Mr. Yves Menard, Air Canada's vice president of marketing, resigned from his position upon