

Government Orders

I will continue to accumulate proofs that Quebec City airport is being treated unfairly. In the summer of 1993, the federal government, to try and woo some voters, gave Quebec City airport international status. Considering how antiquated and small the terminal is, a promise of modernization should have been made at the same time. But it was not forthcoming, Mr. Speaker, on the contrary.

Since then, Transport Canada is continuing its demolition derby at the Quebec City Airport. Despite all attempts by economists and politicians from the area, it is sticking with its plan of shutting down the radar air and traffic control room. On April 1st, the security services normally provided by the RCMP were withdrawn. It is important to note that out of the eight airports affected by this mean decision, Quebec City airport is by far the most important.

To be convinced of this, suffice it to name the other airports affected by this decision: St. John's, Newfoundland, Moncton, Windsor, London, Regina, Saskatoon and Victoria.

But the carelessness and lack of responsibility of Transport Canada did not stop there. Against its own safety rules, Transport Canada is poised to reduce the fire fighting service at Quebec City airport. According to Transport Canada this airport belongs to group 6. In an international airport of this category, the fire department must be operational 24 hours a day; however, at the Quebec City airport, there is no service between 1 a.m. and 7 a.m.

At the Quebec City airport, the category 6 rescue service is geared to handle planes measuring a maximum of 128 feet in length. However the Air Canada Boeing 767 which serves Quebec City three times a week is 160 feet long; the Air Transat and Royal Lockheed 1011s, which use Quebec City airport several times a week, are 180 feet long; the Air Transat Boeings, which land regularly in Quebec City, are 155 feet long.

• (1225)

Far be it from me to prevent these planes from coming to Quebec City; it is up to Transport Canada to make its fire department comply with its own regulations and not to air carriers to abandon a lucrative market.

The Minister of Transport, who can only talk about safety when asked questions in this House, is poised to eliminate one fire truck and to lay-off one fireman. Because of this decision, Transport Canada will probably have to downgrade the status of the Jean-Lesage Airport. This is how it develops air transportation in Quebec, and prepares for Quebec 2002 and the increasing needs for efficient and modern means of transportation. If the federal government wanted to make sure that Quebecers would vote in favour of sovereignty at the next referendum, it could not do any better than this.

Let us now compare Toronto airport with Montreal airports. When the government decided to privatize major Canadian airports, Transport Canada turned over the most profitable one, the Toronto airport, to the private sector, and Montreal airport to a non-profit corporation. This is much to the credit of stakeholders in Montreal, but the same cannot be said of those in Toronto.

As if this picture of political power at work in Canada were not bleak enough already, in Transport Canada's newsletters for February and April, you can read about investments the department plans to make in construction projects in Canadian airports. In Thunder Bay, construction from January to October; in Toronto, from April to December; In Ottawa, from May to December; in Lac-du-Bonnet, Manitoba, from May to August; in Saskatoon, from June to August; in Vancouver, from June 1994 to June 1995. And back in Ontario, from May to October, construction in the Hamilton, Oshawa, London, Muskoka, Sault-Ste. Marie, Timmins and Windsor airports. In Quebec, sweet nothing!

To conclude, I would like to quote remarks from the Minister of Transport himself, as reported in a press release from Transport Canada dated February 10, 1994: "The federal government will not patch up Lester B. Pearson International Airport. Decisions regarding development plans will be tied directly to those regarding the administrative structure of the airport. I am anxious to hear what all the federal members of Parliament from the greater Toronto area, members who are here to represent the interests of their constituents, will have to say on the subject. I am confident they will reflect faithfully the majority opinion of their communities. If they can achieve a consensus on the future of number one airport in Canada, the government will comply with their recommendations".

That is precisely the attitude the Quebec City region is asking from the Minister of Transport, because a consensus has existed for quite a while in our region to keep the terminal control unit, build a new control tower as well as expand and modernize the Jean-Lesage International Airport.

As for the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry's agog over the delays caused by this debate on investments to be made at the Toronto airport, it leaves me cold as a January morning.

Mr. Gaston Pélouquin (Brome—Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-22 is a perfect example of these "scorpio" bills to which the Liberal Party has accustomed us. Innocuous at first sight, it can become disastrous if one is not careful. Bill C-22 is only four pages long and contains only twelve short sections. But beware! The fatal sting is in clause 10, which provides that developers who lose a deal as a result of public pressure may be entitled to compensation. Liberals could not really drop their