

Oral Questions

The Judge Advocate General confirmed that the former deputy minister had nothing whatsoever to do with the drafting of the terms of reference. They were submitted to the Privy Council office. They were reviewed by the Department of Justice and everyone stands by them.

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[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORT

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, in reply to a question in the House from the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister of Transport said that his decision to delay Air Canada's access to Hong Kong market was connected to a similar decision involving Canadian's access to the German market. These are two separate issues. In the case of Hong Kong, negotiations were successful. Air Canada said it was ready to start operations this summer and has even negotiated landing slots.

My question is directed to the Minister of Transport. In the case of Hong Kong, could the Minister tell us what other reasons, aside from Canadian's access to the German market, would prevent him from letting Air Canada start its operations on this market in the summer of 1995, since everything is in place?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows perfectly well that negotiations with the Hong Kong airport authorities were concluded only a few days ago.

• (1430)

When we decided to establish a level of 300,000 passengers before identifying a second destination, we made sure that there would be two locations on this planet where this rule would come into force this year: in Germany and Hong Kong.

As I have already pointed out, for the past 14 months Air Canada has had access to Japan, a market this airline has coveted for a very long time. It is now able to prepare for its arrival in Hong Kong, another very important market. For Canadian Airlines International, which needs landing rights in Germany and other destinations in Asia, it is also very important to be able to plan ahead and have some certainty when agreements are negotiated, not only with these countries but also with the financial institutions that support these airlines.

I still say that, after all, Air Canada president Hollis Harris said publicly that he appreciated the work done by a government that opened these markets to Air Canada for the first time in its history.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, would the minister not agree that it was his eagerness to accommodate Canadian that led him to delay Air Canada's access to the Hong Kong market, in the process delaying the creation of 500 jobs with this airline, including a large number of jobs at headquarters in Montreal and at the Dorval maintenance centre?

[English]

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian aviation industry would explain to my hon. friend that the progress we have made in the last 14 or 15 months is unparalleled in Canadian aviation history.

We have been able to arrange a situation in which as of the end of this year every allocation of an air route in this country will be absolutely transparent. There will be conditions and criteria that allow for Canadian Airlines International and Air Canada to plan, to purchase aircraft, to lease aircraft, to do their marketing in an atmosphere of certainty unheard of in the aviation industry in Canada.

The proof of that is even before we announced the second designation based on the 300,000 passenger level, Air Canada had already indicated it was in the process of hiring nearly 1,000 new employees: pilots, attendants and people who work in maintenance and on ground activities.

I understand the hon. member's distaste for the progress we have been able to make. The airline industry in Canada is in better shape today than it has been for the last 20 years.

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PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, more unanswered questions have surfaced surrounding the Pearson airport deal. A Transport Canada report dated November 4, 1993 contradicts the Nixon report. A Deloitte & Touche report and a Price Waterhouse report contradict the Nixon report.

Questions have been raised concerning the Prime Minister's private meeting with Jack Matthews and Charles Bronfman, two key players in the Pearson deal.

It is time to lift the fog over Pearson. Will the government order an independent judicial inquiry into the cancelled airport deal?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister spoke to the allegations very clearly in the House yesterday.

I want to challenge the hon. member, as I challenged Leader of the Opposition. If they have allegations to make, stand like a man and make them here in the House instead of hiding behind some scurrilous newspaper claims that have absolutely no foundation in fact.