

Oral Questions

government with respect to decontrols has been made clear frequently in the House, and I think is well understood.

REASON FOR RESIGNATION OF MR. PEPIN AS CHAIRMAN OF BOARD

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary question. In the article in the *Financial Post* to which I have referred Mr. Pepin is quoted as saying:

The government is abdicating its responsibility to govern . . .

And further:

What you have is the government saying to the CMA and the CLC: 'You make policy for Canada'. That's not acceptable in our democracy.

Would the Acting Prime Minister indicate if these were in fact the reasons why Mr. Pepin chose to resign as chairman of the AIB? In short, did he resign out of utter frustration at the lack of government policy?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely certain that is not the case.

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CITIZENSHIP

IMPROVEMENT OF SYSTEM FOR ISSUING CERTIFICATES— SUGGESTION BETTER LIAISON BE ESTABLISHED WITH PASSPORT OFFICE

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Secretary of State which was the subject of a motion moved under Standing Order 43 by my colleague the hon. member for Okanagan-Kootenay a few days ago. I think this matter applies to any member of parliament. We are wondering whether it is within the wit and wisdom of the minister to devise some simple system for issuing citizenship certificates, particularly those needed for passports. I can assure the minister the present system is archaic and chaotic.

Hon. John Roberts (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, we have experienced a virtual doubling of applications for citizenship. This was not entirely unforeseen as a result of the provisions in the new law which was recently proclaimed, though the flow of applications is above what we had expected. I am advised that within two or three months the backlog should be cleared up. Yesterday I signed a letter to go to all hon. members which I am not sure has been received by their offices as yet. It indicated the steps we are taking and asked for their co-operation, saying that I would particularly like to receive from them examples of hardship cases so that I could take steps to make sure they are dealt with promptly.

Mr. Fairweather: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would it be possible to have a better system for those citizenship certificates needed for passports? People cannot possibly wait three or four months for passport applications. One suggestion I would make is that there should be some liaison between the passport office and the citizenship office. At the

[Mr. MacEachen.]

moment there is none; it is as if they are living in two separate countries.

Mr. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I will look into this suggestion and see whether there would be an effective way of improving liaison between passport offices and citizenship applications. I expect that is not the root of the blockage and it might not be possible to significantly ameliorate the situation through such an approach but I will investigate it.

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AIR TRANSPORT

EFFECT OF PROPOSED TAKE-OVER OF TRANSAIR BY PACIFIC WESTERN ON PRAIRIE REGIONAL SERVICE

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Transport arises from reports of negotiations between Pacific Western Airlines and Transair for the take-over of the latter company. Could the minister confirm or deny the reports and could he give an assurance that they will not further delay the implementation of the long-promised prairie regional air service?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have been aware for some time of the discussions which have been taking place in connection with the possible rearrangement of regional air carriers, including that to which the hon. member referred. I have not heard either formally or informally of any finality to the arrangement at this point. I cannot give any clear indication of the impact this would have on the prairie services application of Transair.

DATE OF COMMENCEMENT OF PRAIRIE REGIONAL SERVICE

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister at this time give a tentative date for the inauguration of service urgently needed for the economic development of that region?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the difficulty with that is the procedures which must take place are in the hands of the Canadian Transport Commission, it is impossible for me to forecast the various steps they will take. I believe May 9 was the date they set for the final reply to interventions by the various applicants and after that time they were to outline the next steps to be taken before they reached a final decision on the applications.

PROPOSED SALE OF TRANSAIR—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE MAINTENANCE FACILITIES WILL REMAIN IN WINNIPEG

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to address a question to the Minister of Transport on the proposed sale of Transair. Since Manitobans lost Air Canada maintenance facilities, an action which in the view of most Manitobans was unjustified, and in view of the possible sale of Transair whose headquarters are in Winnipeg, could the min-