

Adjournment Debate

da's takeover would introduce it to regional routes when its purpose should be national and international. Our party has stated that it would ensure that regional routes of less than 500 miles would be left to the regional carriers.

Thirdly, as the former minister of consumer and corporate affairs has noted, the proposed acquisition might violate provisions of the Combines Investigation Act and those of the National Transportation Act. Of course, Mr. Speaker, I do not think that this government will be overly impressed with this argument as its previous attitude toward the participation of other Crown corporations in unsavoury affairs, such as the uranium cartel situation and the sale of nuclear reactors, has already demonstrated.

A fourth reason for our opposition to the proposed acquisition lies in a suspicion of the motives of Air Canada. Air Canada has stated that its "acquisition of Nordair's highly successful charter organization would be of particular interest to Air Canada, because of the national airline's determination to become more active in the significant and growing area of operations and marketing". It must be remembered, however, that it was Air Canada that opposed the introduction of advance booking charters.

Finally, in times of supposed government spending restraints, and remembering the government's often repeated assertion, more often than not straight from the horse's mouth of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Horner), that it wants to encourage the private sector, it does appear ridiculous to permit this government body to purchase a profitable public firm.

Our party has not been afraid to give leadership. I have outlined our position on the Nordair takeover this evening. In view of the continuing procrastination and monumental indecision on the other side as evidenced by the answers which I received the other day, I would strongly suggest to this House that it is not for the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to come as he did into the House today and suggest that he is going to kick anyone in the slats, as he so eloquently put it, but for us to do exactly that to awaken this slumbering government.

● (2227)

Mr. Thomas H. Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): In reply to the hon. member who raised this question, it might be valuable to put on record once again the main reasons why the Canadian Transport Commission did not turn down the application by Air Canada to buy out Nordair. They are as follows:

1. Pacific Western Airlines acquisition of controlling interest in Transair gave western Canada strong regional carriers under common management and with common objectives. This created a need for strong regional carriers in eastern Canada operating from Montreal to Winnipeg. Nordair is profitable but the level of cash available has limited its dividends. The controlling shareholders wish to dispose of their interest in Nordair.

2. Air Canada intends to operate Nordair as a separate entity and as a regional carrier under the regional air carrier

[Mr. Hnatyshyn.]

policy, the Aeronautics Act and the air carrier regulations. The act and the regulations would require the commission to approve any future merger of Air Canada and Nordair.

3. It is not in the public interest that Nordair fail or not be able to replace equipment. Nordair's cash flow had not been acceptable to its shareholders and the only alternative acceptable to the shareholders is the sale of Nordair. If sale of Nordair to Air Canada is not approved, then the result would be a period of insecurity and instability with respect to Nordair operations.

4. The acquisition of Nordair would not unduly restrict competition because there is little scheduled competition between regionals and there is limited competition between trunk carriers and regionals because of the regional air carrier policy. Financial results have not been satisfactory in spite of the limits on competition.

Points have been raised by nine petitioners, some of them very serious points. The government is giving close and careful consideration to all these matters. I can assure the hon. member there is no dragging of feet on this subject. The government is, as usual, taking a matter of such importance very seriously.

POST OFFICE—ALLEGED LOCK-OUT OF RETURNING STRIKERS

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, the reason I am rising tonight to take part in this adjournment debate is that Canada is in the midst of a postal strike which is causing serious disruption to our people. Delivery of family allowance cheques, social security cheques and accounts due to small businessmen and farmers is being withheld or delayed, and the over-all consequences for Canadians who are not involved in the strike in any way except as innocent third parties are tremendous.

The government used this situation as justification for asking parliament to legislate an end to this strike. Members of my party supported the government in this action. The post office provides an essential service; its activities are as important as those of any other single service throughout the economy and there is no way we can allow our people to continue to be victimized by these interruptions and stoppages. I urge the government to do its utmost to get the CUPW workers back on the job.

I hope the government will take full advantage of the provisions of the law which are available to ensure that members of the union who are on strike illegally return to work. If these measures fail, I believe that some of the 900,000 Canadians who are without jobs today should be given an opportunity to provide this essential service.

● (2232)

The reason I rise tonight to participate in this debate is that the government has spoken out of both sides of its mouth in this instance. In introducing legislation to legislate workers back to work last week, it indicated that the post office was an essential service and that Canadians could not afford to have