

**Hon Senators:** Agreed.

**Senator Everett** tabled:

Letter respecting the presentation of oil compensation expenditures in the Supplementary Estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1982, being a reply to Senator Smith's question of June 16, 1981. (*English text*).

## TRANSPORT

### AIRLINES—SALE OF NORDAIR

**Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, I have a delayed answer to questions asked by Senator Asselin on June 10 and again on June 17 regarding the sale of Nordair. Further to my reply of June 10 to Senator Asselin, who raised a question about progress on the part of the government with regard to the disposition of Nordair, I am informed that there has been no change since I last reported to this chamber on March 12, 1981.

All that can be said at this time is that discussions are continuing with interested parties. They might well lead to the merger of Nordair and Quebecair, provided certain conditions are met.

The conditions I refer to are the same as those previously described to this chamber. The Minister of Transport wishes to see a balanced distribution of ownership in the merged airline between Quebec and Ontario investors, as well as a reconciliation of employee, union and management interests.

I am pleased to report that Nordair continues to perform as one of the most efficient and profitable regional carriers, despite continuing uncertainty over its future ownership. I should emphasize that it will remain a subsidiary of Air Canada until a satisfactory solution can be found.

## EL SALVADOR

### POLITICAL, MILITARY AND SOCIAL SITUATION—DEBATE CONTINUED

The Senate resumed from Thursday, June 11, the debate on the inquiry of Senator Macquarrie calling the attention of the Senate to

- (1) the increasingly dangerous political, military and social situation in El Salvador;
- (2) the compelling hazards of third party interventions and the possibility of the escalation of hostile actions within El Salvador;
- (3) the further compelling importance of the resolution of the conflict by means of a political settlement rather than through recourse to sustained and bloody armed conflict; and
- (4) the value of Canadian encouragement and support of the efforts of those individuals and groups seeking mediation of the conflict in El Salvador.

[The Hon. the Speaker:]

**Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government):**

Honourable senators, in his intervention on June 11 respecting El Salvador, Senator Macquarrie expressed a desire for more discussion on contemporary issues, and invited participation by others in this debate.

I agree with Senator Macquarrie's view that the conflict in El Salvador is not going to disappear overnight. As I mentioned, I found his intervention to be conscience-stirring and thoughtful. I therefore accept his invitation—and I hope others will—to consider this important question and also the position, as I have been able to understand it, of the national government of Canada on the policy issues with regard to El Salvador. It will quickly appear in the course of my remarks that I agree with Senator Macquarrie on almost every principle he raised. Essentially, I believe that his feelings are the same as those that motivate the government, and that are behind the policy that has been established and adopted by the government on the conflict and the tragedies in El Salvador. I say "tragedies" because I think that the long suffering of the Salvadoran people and the increasingly dangerous situation that is developing there are clear. No one should try to outdo Senator Macquarrie's description of the situation.

● (1450)

The combination of suffering by fellow human beings because of a serious political conflict, the fact that this suffering takes place in the context of such political conflict and the potential consequences for world peace which exist because of the forces that are concerned and are intervening constitutes, as Senator Macquarrie said, a very serious situation. The first point with which I agree is Senator Macquarrie's priorities on those elements. He lists as his first priority the suffering of fellow human beings, no matter what political issues are involved.

The situation in El Salvador is one of human tragedy involving incalculable frustration and pain. It has existed for decades as a result of a series of authoritarian governments working to deny the Salvadoran people the economic development and social justice which, as fellow human beings, we believe—and I think I am speaking for more than just the government here—is their right. As pointed out by Senator Macquarrie, it is a situation marked by extreme violence and abuses of human rights. According to the information I have, some 16,000 Salvadorans are estimated to have been killed in the last 19 months. so it is a matter of concern around the globe, not to mention Canada.

Honourable senators, I would like to outline the position of the government as I understand it. Let me draw your attention to the statement the Secretary of State for External Affairs made in the House of Commons. It outlines the policy of the national government with regard to El Salvador. In it he enunciates Canada's concern at the continued high level of violence and the widespread use of torture by parties to the conflict. In working for improvements, Canada's national government has been active particularly through bilateral intervention and multilateral intervention, and with respect to refugee help and the direct contribution of financial aid.