

What remains using Gander is a flight that may occur once a month, probably less than that.

I would like to draw the Minister's attention to the figures provided by the Department of Transport today. In July, eight Aeroflot flights landed at Gander; in June, there were five; in May, there was one; in April, there were two; in March, there were two; and, in February, there were two.

An Hon. Member: Where were they going?

Mr. Kilgour: I hear someone asking where they were going. My information is that they were going from Moscow to Gander to Havana, South America, or vice versa. It would be a reasonable further indication of our disapproval of the tragedy and what has happened since. My Party and I salute the Government and give it full credit for the step it took at Mirabel. Hopefully we will take this additional step at Gander with the hope that these flights will be restored quickly. Recognizing that there will be a loss of revenue to people in Gander I hope they will be compensated.

Every Canadian listening to the debate would primarily see it as a moment of national unity. It seems to me that we as Canadians are saying that this is not the way we want the world to be run. We are a young country. We have people from every corner of the world in this land. We want our leaders and our country to behave with restraint, human kindness and compassion and to lead us toward peace. Obviously this act of the Soviets was not an act toward peace. We are as desperately anxious for peace in the world as I know you are, Mr. Speaker. We want a peaceful world, a world that respects opportunity for everyone. That is the message which each and every Member of the House of Commons has received from his constituents. They want us to act wisely but firmly. As I mentioned before, it would be a firm but prudent addition to what has been done if the flights into Gander were stopped.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brian Tobin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I am not happy but I feel it is important for as many Hon. Members as possible to rise and participate in the debate this evening which has been so properly raised by the New Democratic Party. Indeed it is frustrating for me—and I know it must be frustrating for every Member of the House—to rise to speak about an event, a government and a system which resulted in the deaths of innocent people, ten innocent Canadians and 259 others. It is frustrating because one gains the impression that the words we utter in this Chamber, judging by the reaction from the Soviet Union in recent days, are falling on uncaring, insensitive and perhaps even deaf ears. Frustrating as it may seem, we in the House of Commons as representatives of the Canadian people must stand and be heard in condemning a brutal and cold act of murder.

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I appreciate the importance of giving a balanced and measured response to what has occurred. I realize as well that there can be no possibility on our part of sending out any other signal to those in our country and elsewhere in the world that we in this Chamber unanimously condemn this act and label it precisely what it was, that is, murder.

When my colleagues and I condemn the system of government and the mentality that could allow this kind of savage event to occur, we do not condemn a nation, its history or its people. We do condemn the geopolitical reality of today, a reality that began to evolve immediately after World War II when a country grabbed up territory. At that time other old world empires such as the so-called British Empire were disintegrating. At that time France was re-evaluating its role in North Africa. Other free nations were re-evaluating the colonial attitude. We condemn today a political system which at that same time, out of crisis, deemed it necessary to grab up territory and expand its borders.

The kind of paranoia and lack of understanding of the realities in an ever-shrinking world, as my colleague said, which existed in 1945 still exists today. It has allowed innocent people on a commercial airline to be brutally murdered. This was because of the feeling on the part of the leadership of the Russian nation. Somehow even a commercial airliner and innocent lives must fall before the knife of self-interest and the interest of a sovereign state.

The reaction of the Government of Canada has been appropriate. As the Hon. Member for York-Peel (Mr. Stevens) has asked, there has been a measured response, but it has been a firm response. We were the first nation in the free world to respond in a tangible way and take concrete action.

Some Members have expressed the concern that we not take action that would financially affect the interests of our nation, such as the banning of Soviet Aeroflot flights. I can assure Hon. Members that whether it be in Gander or in Montreal, Canadians do not put a price tag on the integrity of human life. Nor do they put a price tag on the values that we hold dear, values that we have built up in Canada.

I repeat that I find it frustrating to speak. I somehow feel that I am not being listened to. However, we in the free world, especially those in this House of Commons, must avoid any possibility of sending out a divided message. I appreciate and associate myself with the amendment proposed by the Hon. Member opposite. However, because of the desire to express ourselves clearly in condemning the Soviet Union, I would not want, because of procedural questions, to send out any message. I do not believe the Member opposite would want to send out any signal to the Soviet Union that this House is in any way divided. I hope arrangements can be reached to ensure that this House is unanimous in this condemnation.

We must speak. To those who say we must act in even more dramatic ways, I say that we have to accept the real world. I was not around at the time, but as a student of history I can imagine some of the tensions that existed previous to World