

Air Canada

It has been the history of Air Canada to maintain six crew bases throughout the country in Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. This is something which was done by Air Canada while a Crown corporation. The staff members and crew members on the airplanes have come to rely on Air Canada maintaining these six bases. If Air Canada decides to close these bases, which it very well might, then imagine the disruption this will cause to these people who have been living their working lives in the cities that will no longer function as bases for Air Canada. There is quite a prevalent rumour that Air Canada will close four of these six bases leaving only the bases in Toronto and Vancouver.

[*Translation*]

It is necessary, Mr. Speaker, that Air Canada obtain the assurance of the Government of Canada and of the general population that it will stay in Montreal, which is a base for Air Canada employees, and that there will be no staff cuts so that that base can continue to function normally. Those are obligations that Air Canada must respect.

[*English*]

In all of the cities in Canada where these bases exist we are not only talking about the bases themselves but about the employees who work on them. I believe that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister is sincere in his determination that these bases will remain. I give him full credit for that. I commend him on his attitude because I know he feels as I do and as most Members of the House do that there are obligations to people.

My only concern is that this message be loud and clear and that the obligation be inviolate as far as Air Canada is concerned.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I also want to speak for a few minutes on these two amendments and explain the importance of them. Especially in the city of Winnipeg the need to maintain a maintenance base is very important to the economy of that city. As you know, Mr. Speaker, in the past there have been moves to take away a lot of business from Winnipeg by the previous Liberal Government with respect to the maintenance base. That had a devastating effect not only on the economy of the city but on many families who either lost employment or who were forced to move.

I would also like to explain how important these amendments are in light of what has happened in other situations in which the Government has maintained operations without closing them down. I will give a very dramatic example of the military base at the community of Churchill in my riding.

Before I was born there was a very strong military base at Churchill with thousands of people employed at that particular site. What happened over the years is the Government said: "No, we are not closing down the base." But the operational strength went down to 300 people. A few years later it went down to 200 people. Eventually, it went down to a situation in which there were only 12 people at the military base in

Churchill. The Government could say: "We did not close down the base at Churchill." Obviously, it was keeping a skeleton crew there which was not able to do the regular maintenance.

The Government has said that it will keep operations in these various cities, whether it is with respect to flight attendants or the maintenance operations. However, there is no guarantee that these maintenance people will be doing anything more than cleaning up the seats and, perhaps, doing some very minor work.

If the Government is sincere in its commitment that these communities will maintain the maintenance and overhaul facilities and maintain the staff components for the flight attendants, then we want that written into the legislation. As we know, a promise was made in 1983 in which it was expressed that we would not even sell Air Canada. That became a different promise by 1985 when the Government said that it would sell only 45 per cent of Air Canada. Who knows what the Government's situation will be two years from now and how good a verbal promise is.

If the Government is sincere in its promises to the city of Winnipeg and to those other cities, then why not put it in the legislation? I hope that the government Members will stand up for the words of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) and put their words into the legislation to secure the jobs of those people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question is on Motion No. 3. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five Members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 114(11), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.