

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, July 3, 1952

The house met at eleven o'clock.

QUESTION PASSED AS ORDER FOR RETURN

FLIGHTS OF AIRCRAFT A.O.P.—10,000

Mr. Coyle:

1. On what occasions since January 1, 1951, has the C-5 aircraft bearing registration A.O.P.-10,000 been dispatched on flights outside of Canada?
2. What was the mileage, destination and route flown on each such flight?
3. Were passengers other than members of the Royal Canadian Air Force personnel carried on any such flight?
4. If so, what are the names of such passengers, and in each case, what was the status and reason for travel?
5. Were such passengers carried throughout the flight, and if not, between what points was each passenger carried?
6. Having regard to the number of passengers carried and the over-all cost per mile of operating the aircraft, what was the estimated cost of such trips for each passenger named?
7. What was paid by each of the passengers named for such flights?

Mr. Drew: Mr. Speaker, this question was under discussion yesterday. At that time the Minister of Public Works explained that if he were to give consent to its becoming an order for return it would be necessary to indicate a limitation imposed by the fact that, according to information he had received, records which would give the information requested in the latter part of the question—that is, numbers 3 to 7 inclusive—would have been destroyed, under the practice of the R.C.A.F. in relation to information of that kind.

Without in any way debating the answer given, I wonder if the minister is aware that there are circumstances which make it rather difficult to understand why that information would not be available in this particular case, because a question in the same form was on the order paper at the last session, and remained on the order paper at the time the last session closed on December 29, 1951. It had been on the order paper for a very considerable time.

I have asked the hon. member in whose name the question stood at that time, and he has explained to me that he understood—incorrectly, as it happens—that the question would be answered afterwards, although there had been no formal request that it

become an order for return. For that reason the question was allowed to lapse at that time.

I am inclined to think that if, instead of accepting the general explanation in regard to practice, the Minister of Public Works would find out if there was not some information obtained at that time and now on file, he would probably find that all this information covering the period between January 1, 1951, the date mentioned in the question, and a period a year ago, or at such time as the records were destroyed, was available. I leave it in that position. If the minister says that it is subject to the limitation in relation to the practice of the R.C.A.F. I naturally, on behalf of the member who discussed the matter with him, would be called upon to accept that limitation, subject to any discussion of the practice as something independent of this question itself.

Subject to what I have said I accept the proposal on behalf of the hon. member in whose name the question stands that it stand as an order for return. I would ask the minister to refer to this subject again in view of the information I have given him about this same question having been on the order paper in the last session. I would hope probably that information might be available.

Mr. Claxton: Perhaps I should say to the leader of the opposition that we shall be glad indeed to look further into the matter. I think it only fair to say that the R.C.A.F. does destroy passenger lists at the end of six months. I am told that the practice of the commercial airlines is to destroy passenger manifests every month so that the R.C.A.F. keep them for a much longer period. I shall be glad to see if any other information is available in accordance with the suggestion of the leader of the opposition.

Mr. Drew: I do not want to enlarge this unduly, but there is an important point involved here. In the first place I understood the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Fournier) to state yesterday that it was a year, but now the Minister of National Defence says it is six months.

Mr. Claxton: It is in respect of the period of six months, I beg your pardon.