

Government Orders

In conclusion, I support, as do my colleagues on this side of the House, the thrust of this legislation. Naturally we will want to have it studied carefully in committee to see where it can be improved. I note that it is housekeeping legislation from 1985 which obviously was not completely fool-proof. I hope that we can tidy it up in committee. At the same time I want to make the point, and it is a general point since this is the principle surrounding this bill, that the government should act to make it easier for regional carriers to operate in Atlantic Canada and to encourage the airline transportation infrastructure we so badly need in that part of the country.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, I am anxious to take part in debate on this bill. Here we have the largest or second largest department in the whole government and neither the Minister of Transport nor the Minister of State for Transport are in the House. It seems to me that it should be a requirement in any self-respecting government or cabinet that when a minister has a bill before the House, he damned well should be here for the whole debate. If he is not available, tough cookies. We will inform him about that kind of responsibility he has if and when we get to see him in front of a committee.

I want to mention something about an item in Bill C-5. It concerns security. I do not know where this new minister and the new minister of state have been and how much homework they have done, but it is understandable. I have been through 13 or 14 Ministers of Transport since I came here. My hon. friend from Halifax talks about how many flights he makes. Well I have done over 900 in 25 years. I think I know a little bit about it.

Three generations of my family have been in transportation. I am sure as heck no expert, but I want to remind the House and remind both ministers, if we can find them, that the transport committee went to Europe three or four years ago and we submitted some unanimous, all-party recommendations. We looked into ports, railroads and airports. We spent over three weeks on it. When it comes to airports, we went to Heathrow in London, Schiphol in Amsterdam, the airport in Frankfurt and Orly-Charles de Gaulle in Paris.

The one thing we found in those four locations, and you would have to admit that they are all at least as big as Pearson International and it did not matter what kind of government they had, is that they were not going to leave airport security up to private enterprise. They were not going to leave the safety and security of the travel-

ling public and the airline employees up to whom could get by the cheapest. In every instance the security operations were run by the equivalent of our Department of Transport.

The transport committee made a unanimous recommendation, all parties, that airport security should be operated and run by the Department and Ministry of Transport.

Now that was not easy to come by. We all met sort of half way and we learned from what we found out in those places. So the conclusion remains, as the committee found, that it cannot be left to the airlines to contract for and implement security because they will get by as cheap as possible to cut down costs. Thanks to deregulation they are going to cut corners. They always have and they always will. When you see the spectacle of 60 per cent, 70 per cent or 80 per cent turnover in personnel and security staffs of various and sundry security companies that operate in this country at various airports, it makes you wonder how well trained they are, how good they are at their job, what they get for pay and fringe benefits and what they get for on and off hours because it is a very demanding and boring job.

• (1720)

They get the minimum. My friend had better not say that to me because he ain't been there.

If you put this under the Ministry of Transport, it is responsible for staff, staff training, pay and benefits, a less rapid turnover in personnel. It is deplorable what has been going on at airport after airport across this country. You cannot call that the maximum or best kind of security.

The ministry can bill the various airlines at any given airport on a *pro rata* basis for the costs for that security, and the costs will likely be higher than they presently are. I have yet to hear any taxpayer or voter complain about paying an extra few dollars on his plane ticket to be assured of the best possible security. Anyone who would suggest otherwise does not know what he is talking about.

I would like to move to another item—airport expansion. There is a fundamental principle about airports. The government, under three or four different ministers of transport, did exactly the opposite of what you should do in transportation economics, airline economics. The stupid mistake was that it went and expanded terminal capacity before it expanded runway capacity. It did it backwards; it had Terminal 3 built by the private sector.