

Inquiries of the Ministry

the Minister without Portfolio who acts in that capacity. Has the government given consideration to extending the franchise of Canadian Pacific Airlines to the Atlantic provinces so that there will be two main line carriers in that area, and the situations that are likely to take place within the next few days will not totally incapacitate the people of that area from getting around?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Transport Commission has been in touch with the other air lines. If requests are received from the other air lines to provide additional services the commission, whose primary responsibility is to serve the Canadian public, will, I am certain, give its consent to any reasonable requests for additional service to the public.

Mr. Nesbitt: Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary question. That is not exactly what I had in mind. I want to ask the minister whether consideration is being given by the Department of Transport to extending permanently the franchise of Canadian Pacific Airlines to the Atlantic region so that there will be two main carriers in the area and so that in the event of a strike on the part of one airline or the other, service will be maintained to the public.

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, the commission can only consider applications and, so far as I know, there is no application.

Mr. H. Russell MacEwan (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. Would he advise us what action the cabinet committee he mentioned yesterday has taken on this important matter?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it has established certain contingency plans for eventualities to do with matters such as the transportation of mail or, in urgent circumstances, the transportation of people.

CHARLOTTETOWN-MONTREAL JET SERVICE

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Acting Minister of Transport. Will he assure the house that the planned early commencement of direct jet service from Charlottetown to Montreal will not be jeopardized or delayed by the announcement of policy with regard to

regional carriers made the other day by the chairman of the transport commission. Also, could this proposed service be advanced in view the probable impending strike?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, I have been informed on this subject by the president of the commission, who has advised me that he made no statement which would jeopardize the actual proposal of Nordair and Eastern Provincial Airlines. I think the problem arose from the fact that the president of the Commission would not have been in favour of a merger. But they did not in fact propose a merger and therefore there was no statement that would jeopardize the service that has been referred to.

USE OF PRIVATE CARRIERS TO SERVE
SMALLER CENTRES DURING AIR
CANADA STRIKE

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Acting Minister of Transport. In view of the immediate urgency of the strike situation has the government any plans to have Air Canada drop regional service to smaller centres, particularly those in the Atlantic region, and have private carriers take over that passenger service?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, there are no specific plans of that kind.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In order to alleviate fears that exist in the Atlantic region and in smaller centres of Ontario would the acting minister or the Minister of Transport make a statement to the house to allay fears that we will lose the services of Air Canada in the Atlantic region.

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, the routes are determined by the air committee of the Canadian Transport Commission. Applications for routes come forward and are approved or not approved by the Commission. There is no directive by the government and no government policy that will remove Air Canada from the maritimes or from any route at the present time which is now being considered by the commission.

[Later:]

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): I wish to clarify the minister's statement to the effect