

*Supply—Transport*

just do not believe, that the government put into those negotiations the vim and vigour that it should have, particularly with respect to the run from Winnipeg to Chicago. Prior to the adoption of this last bilateral agreement, Air Canada on behalf of Canada had an exclusive run between Toronto and Chicago, but after these negotiations were over that run was no longer exclusive; I believe two American carriers are to be allowed to fly between Chicago and Toronto. If we lost something in that area between Toronto and Chicago, then surely there should have been a *quid pro quo*; we should have obtained the route between Chicago and Winnipeg.

I suggest that it would make sense for Air Canada, which has a transcontinental route that flies from Vancouver to Toronto, sometimes stopping at Winnipeg, sometimes coming through Edmonton and Saskatoon, sometimes coming through Regina and Calgary, to have a route from Vancouver to Toronto which sometimes would go via Winnipeg and Chicago. The one leg is there, Chicago to Toronto. It would have made sense not just for Winnipeg but for Canada and for Air Canada to have had the connecting leg from Winnipeg to Chicago.

As I say, Mr. Chairman, I find it impossible to believe that any real effort was put into those negotiations to get that sensible, additional leg, particularly when at the same time that we did not get the Winnipeg to Chicago route we lost the exclusive character of the route that we had between Chicago and Toronto. I know what we are up against. These are negotiations that cannot be reopened for three years. But it looks as though if this government is going to last we will have to keep arguing throughout those three years to obtain a better deal when the next negotiations come around.

I know the minister gets pretty impatient about grievances from Winnipeg regarding the way we have been treated in terms of transportation, but these grievances are very real and, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North said this afternoon, the people of Winnipeg and Manitoba are united on them. Other aspects of the problem have been spelled out by other members. I emphasize in particular the disservice the government did to Winnipeg, the disservice it did to Canada and the disservice I feel it did to Air Canada when it failed to get as part of that bilateral agreement the Winnipeg to Chicago run.

A local matter that I would like to mention with regard to Winnipeg is the promise we

have had from this minister and the minister before him that something was going to be done about the situation at the Winnipeg International Airport with respect to the stairs that people have to go up and down when coming into that airport off the planes that land there. When you are leaving the airport it is not so bad, there are escalators to get up, and then you walk down; but when you are landing at Winnipeg you land on the ground level and have to go up a flight of stairs, and then down a flight of stairs, apparently for no reason whatsoever.

Apparently something went wrong with the design or the government ran out of money at the time. But two or three times the minister has assured me that investigations are under way as to putting in some kind of movable ramp to avoid this necessity. I regret very much that time seems to go by without anything being done about this problem. I urge the minister to give active consideration to this matter, which is important to the efficient functioning of the airport terminal at Winnipeg, and which is important to the large number of older people, people with children and so on, who use the facilities of that otherwise very attractive and very efficient airport terminal.

There is just one other matter I wish to mention before I sit down. It is one I have raised countless times and I hope I do not have to go on raising it countless times. I refer to the position of retired employees of Canadian National Railways. I know the minister's attitude and I am as sick of that attitude as he is of hearing me raise it. His attitude is that the government cannot do something special for retired civil servants or for retired Canadian National employees. This is an attitude that seems utterly unwilling to recognize the fact that the government has a responsibility to these groups of people akin not only to its responsibility to citizens generally, but it has a responsibility to them as an employer.

I know that the Canadian National is the employer and not the Canadian government, but I also know that when the Canadian government wants something done in this area, something gets done. I know that during the Conservative regime from 1957 to 1962 something was done; it was not enough, but something was done for retired civil servants and for Canadian National employees already retired. I also know that the Liberals who were on the opposition side of