

and in Canada, and turn out of their jobs about 300 workers, is it the intention of the Minister of Transport to appeal to the company for carrying on its service at least till 1967, so that our districts may take advantage of the World Fair of 1967?

[English]

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, several of my colleagues, in addition to the hon. member, have raised this question of the suspension of this service by Canada Steamship Lines. There is no law of which I am aware under which the company could be directed to continue this service, and I have made diligent inquiries to find out.

The only connection my department had with this matter was that we did have the duty of inspecting the ships, and the ships that were in this service were so old that it was generally considered, both by the department and by the company, that they were no longer safe.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

VIET NAM—INQUIRY AS TO U.S. REQUEST FOR AID

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister. Did the United States ask the government of Canada for troops and other military personnel to serve in the war in Viet Nam together with United States troops? If not, for what did they ask?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker, no request was made for Canadian troops.

Mr. Woolliams: May I ask a supplementary question. I believe certain public statements were attributed to both the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Prime Minister in this connection. For what did the United States ask and what commitment was made, if any?

Mr. Pearson: No commitment was given. We agreed to continue the kind of economic and financial aid we had already pledged ourselves to give.

AIR TRANSPORT

INQUIRY AS TO FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS ON U.S.-CANADA AGREEMENT

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question

Inquiries of the Ministry

to the Minister of Transport. Is it the intention of the government to continue its negotiations with the United States concerning the air agreement made recently, with a view to obtaining rights for Canadian carriers to operate between Winnipeg and points in the United States?

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): I assume the hon. gentleman is aware that the agreement was signed on Monday and that it is somewhat difficult, therefore, to continue negotiations in respect of that agreement. The agreement does provide that in three years it may be reviewed, and it is the hope of the government that the traffic south from Winnipeg will expand rapidly enough that the case for doubletracking that route will be incontestable in a few years time.

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): May I ask a supplementary question. I should like to ask the Minister of Transport when he will give a full report to the house on the recent air agreement affecting Canada and the United States and his complete failure to protect the interests of Winnipeg and western Canada in that connection.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, as soon as the rules will permit it I shall be very happy to give the fullest report of which I am capable. I will explain at that time that under this bilateral agreement we got a direct service to Minneapolis which never existed before and which will be of great benefit to the hon. gentleman's constituents.

[Later:]

Mr. S. J. Enns (Portage-Neepawa): My question is directed to the Minister of Transport. In view of the rather unhappy reaction to the recent air agreement with the United States government which was finally signed on Monday last, can the minister assure the house and the country that a national air policy will be developed so that future negotiations will not be at the expense of one part of the country as opposed to another?

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, I cannot accept the hon. gentleman's speech. So far as his question is concerned, in the opinion of the government the air agreement is in the national interest, notwithstanding the fact that there were bound to be disappointments on both sides of the border. We hope for the development of air traffic which will be such that there will be great expansion within three years.