

**Mr. Horner:**—that safety standards are maintained in every part of Canada.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Horner:** I want to commend the minister for the way he stuck up for and stood by Mr. Keenan. It is regrettable that he had to resign from the commission. I am pleased that the minister has appointed a new commission so that the whole situation can become more stable. It is regrettable, however, that he appointed two members to this commission and not three, because there cannot be a majority decision reached. While the minister appointed a member from each official language group, I think the best recommendation I could give him would be to appoint a third person from neither of those groups.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Horner:** In that way, a majority decision could be reached. Hon. members laugh at that, but we all remember the Bilcon report in which a minority position was filed. I think the country wants this issue settled, not for political reasons but for the safety of air passengers, and I do not know whether these two gentlemen, Mr. Sinclair and Mr. Chouinard, are satisfactory to the pilots' association or to the air traffic controllers. I do know that in settling the contract with the air traffic controllers Mr. Keenan was satisfactory. I hope Mr. Sinclair and Mr. Chouinard will be, and I hope we can get back to a more stable situation with the highest degree of safety maintained.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Mr. Speaker, following the minister's statement and the response of the official spokesman for the Conservative party, I would like at the outset—perhaps it is not necessary, but under the present circumstances perhaps it is worthwhile—to emphasize the very profound commitment of the New Democratic Party to the principle of bilingualism.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Broadbent:** As hon. members in all parties recognize, on an issue as sensitive and as important as this, the political issue involved is in maintaining a federal Canada. It is always extremely difficult to apply a principle to a particular circumstance, and it is very important for those of us involved in political decision-making to have a basic sense of trust about the motives of those involved in reaching a decision on this matter so that we do not call into question basic commitments if there happens to be a difference in judgment about the application of a general principle to the particular circumstances at issue.

In his comments today the minister correctly noted that the issue is not whether bilingualism is introduced all across Canada. That, of course, is not the issue. Unfortunately, perhaps that is widely misunderstood, and I am glad the minister emphasized that that is not the issue. The issue pertains very much to the province of Quebec, with a minor extension to the Ottawa-Hull area. The minister is also correct when he says that bilingualism has been effectively in operation for some two years in the province of Quebec, and is in certain areas right now. He might have

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added that it has been in operation in those aspects of aviation covered only by visual flight rules. That is an important technical consideration, as I am sure the minister recognizes.

The issue is about the extension of bilingualism in air traffic control in the province of Quebec, particularly in the Montreal area, from those areas covered by visual flight rules to those covered by instrument flight rules. Again, that is an important technical consideration. The minister has said that this extension raises more complex questions and that is why technical studies and an independent public inquiry are needed.

There are a number of serious and, for me, as yet unresolved issues flowing from the government's position and from the terms of reference of the commission which were tabled today by the minister when he made his statement. In the preamble of the order in council it is stated that the commission will consider both the safety implications and the operational efficiency implications of extending bilingualism into flight control procedures in the province of Quebec. The order in council elaborates in detail on a number of specific considerations which arise from those two general points. However—and this is an area of serious concern to me—at no point is it stated that the commission, after all its deliberations on all the specific considerations which are referred to it, can reach a negative conclusion. I choose my words with care when I say that if it cannot reach a negative conclusion it can appropriately be seen as some kind of sham, and a costly sham at that. For example, one possible interpretation of the order in council that the minister has tabled is that bilingualism will be extended regardless of the cost, regardless of efficiency and regardless of the inconvenience to passengers. I am saying that is one clear implication of the order in council as I read it.

● (1520)

For this commission to have any validity at all it is much more important, in our view and in the view of the public of Canada, that it must have the genuinely open option of recommending either "Yes" or "No" after it considers all the factors.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Broadbent:** The implication remains with me that the deck has in fact been stacked by the terms of reference as indicated in the order in council that has been tabled. If the deck is stacked, this implies that the conclusion has been reached and what the minister may be going through here is a costly public relations exercise. If that is the case, what we have is a mere form of political advertising and, like all advertising, it is intended more to deceive than to enlighten. I say those words with care, Mr. Speaker. I hope the questions that follow and the answers we will get from the minister will show that the commission can recommend to the government "Yes" or "No"; that it is not wedded by the terms of reference to come in with a "Yes" answer, with all the elaborate justification for that answer. I repeat, if the commission is not open-ended, if it does not have a completely frank mandate, it will be seen as a sham not only by the public but by those now involved in the