

Adjournment Debate

answers from the parliamentary secretary. I strongly suspect, Mr. Speaker, that I will be on my feet again in the near future with the same problem.

Mr. Robert Bockstael (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): The minister has been most concerned about the need for effective emergency locator devices to be carried on board Canadian aircraft. However, his desire to achieve this objective as quickly as possible has been tempered by past experience. As you may know, the department made the carriage of ELTs mandatory in the early 1970s but was obliged to review its decision in the light of technical difficulties experienced with early versions of this equipment.

It has not been mandatory to carry emergency locator transmitters in certain Canadian aircraft since September, 1977, when an airworthiness directive was issued ordering the removal of lithium batteries in the equipment. The batteries became a safety hazard in that they produced sulphurous acid corrosion of internal parts causing false ELT activations and explosions.

A number of months ago a program was instituted to re-establish the requirement for all aircraft to carry ELTs. This program has now been completed and an air navigation order making the carriage of ELTs mandatory was published in *The Canada Gazette* on October 28, 1981. It will require that emergency locator transmitters be carried on board of approximately 20,000 Canadian-registered aircraft after April 1, 1982.

The Department has also revised ELT technical standards to call for less stringent cold-weather performance. Revisions call for 50 hours of continuous ELT transmission at minus 20 degrees Celsius instead of the previous 100 man-hour transmission at minus 40 degrees Celsius.

ELTs will not be required for any aircraft operated within 25 nautical miles of an airport or multi-engine turbo-jets of more than 5,700 kilograms operated over land under instrument flight rules in controlled air space south of latitude 66°30' north.

It was the original intention of the department to establish a compliance date of January 1, 1982. Aircraft owners, however, must be allowed sufficient time to repair or replace their existing ELTs, and the effective date selected of April 1, 1982, will allow a more realistic time period for these corrective actions to take place. This will preclude aircraft operators from being put in a position of being unable to comply with the legislation, through no fault of their own.

A significant number of owners already have properly functioning ELTs on their aircraft. The department estimates that about half of the ELTs required by Canadian aircraft will have to be replaced at a cost of \$350 to \$400 per unit, a minimal cost, Mr. Speaker, compared to the cost of a research and rescue mission, or the possibility of loss of life.

VIA RAIL—CUTS IN SERVICE IN NEW BRUNSWICK

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): On Monday, October 26 I asked the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) to explain with rationality and proper philosophy how he plans to put the passengers from two overloaded trains into one when he cancels the Atlantic as it passes through New Brunswick. I asked what accommodation the minister planned to extend to the travelling population of Canada on emergencies or on holiday excursions, if he now proceeds to destroy the equipment that gives us some kind of service. I asked whether New Brunswick Liberals objected to the cancellation of the Atlantic Limited and the Moncton-Edmundston VIA service. To date I have received no statement from the minister which was either rational or philosophical or logical or explanatory. He continues to affront the House with rhetoric and supposition. I urge him to reconsider his drastic move to eliminate the Atlantic Limited and the Moncton-Edmundston service until he has had time to hear from the multitude of people who depend upon that train service.

● (2210)

We in the official opposition at least took the time at our own expense to hear from groups and individuals, not only in the maritimes but across the country, in order to better understand the hardship this cutback would produce. We spent many long hours listening to testimony on how the cutbacks will isolate towns, destroy businesses, shatter livelihoods, and break apart the very fabric upon which this great country was originally founded. It is a divisive force.

What advice or lack of it has perpetuated the minister's irrational decision? When we were in government we faced the same list of alternatives but, much to the credit of the former minister of transport, the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski), the decision was not to implement the cutbacks as the minister has announced but to increase the VIA budget. One thing is certain: government members from New Brunswick ignored local advice and voted to support the cutbacks. I hope they are planning holidays somewhere else other than in their own constituencies, if they expect to enjoy "peace on earth." They are certainly not expressing "Good will to all men" in their support of VIA Rail cutbacks.

Time does not permit me to go into a detailed report of all the submissions which the task force received, but I urge the minister and hon. members to read thoroughly the task force report. I particularly suggest that maritime members take a look at pages Nos. 41 to 45 of the report wherein all responsible people who made representations on behalf of the continuance of the service are listed. Let me list but a few. There were representations from four different unions, boards of trade, the mayor of Dartmouth, the government of Nova Scotia, the city council of Halifax, the mayor of Saint John, the mayor of Fredericton, city councillors of Moncton, the mayor of Sussex, the mayor of St. Andrews, Fredericton Junction, Mr. Lamey, the director of the Capital Development Commission, and the list goes on. I suggest that hon. members from Atlantic Canada should read the list of influential,