

Supply—Transport

questions relating to air policy, some of them beclouded by a rather phony fight, from my point of view, between free enterprise as represented by Canadian Pacific Airlines and Trans-Canada Air Lines, the government air operation. I say "phony" just to underline the very point that there is not any way in which the general or ordinary taxpayer of Canada can come out on top where air travel, freight or express are concerned. He is obliged to supply, through D.O.T., so many expensive services that in the long run we are brought starkly up against the realization that the provision of air transport is the provision of a service which in essence can never really be made remunerative or profitable in a total sense. Not only do Canadian Pacific Airlines and all these other air lines need subsidies in respect of the provision of facilities, but in many cases they need much more concrete subsidies than that, as indicated by this vote.

Maybe the minister wishes to wait until we have a debate on the creation of the T.C.A.-C.N.R. committee. However, I would appreciate at the present time a brief review of government policy and intentions in this field. I think the matter is opened up by the indication he gave last night that this report is one aspect of a complete review of commercial air line services in Canada.

Mr. Balcer: I should like to say that this inquiry by the air transport board, as do all their inquiries, deals only with the carriers and not with the facilities such as airports and services like the meteorological services and others. I should like to state now that four or five of our major airports are covering all their costs and depreciation, and that several others are almost covering all their operating costs. That is a very encouraging situation when you consider the splendid airports we have in Canada. We have some extremely modern airports with all kinds of facilities such as radio, towers, meteorological services and all sorts of equipment. When you consider how expensive all these services are I think it is a credit to the department that so many of our airports at the present time are covering their operational costs and that some of them—I refer to the largest ones—are covering their depreciation as well as their operating costs.

Mr. Robichaud: Is the minister now in a position to confirm treasury board approval of a grant for the construction of an airport at Bathurst, Gloucester county?

Mr. Balcer: Yes, I am in a position to confirm this approval right now.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Chairman, I should like to say a few words about the airport at Dawson Creek, which is in the centre of the

[Mr. Fisher.]

busiest part of Canada. Piles of money are being spent there. Bennett is building a big dam at Hudson Hope.

The Chairman: Order. I am sorry to have to tell the hon. member that these remarks are not in order at this time, as the item relates to air services in Saskatchewan and Alberta. I believe the hon. member is embarking on a subject—

Mr. Pickersgill: On the point of order you have raised, Mr. Chairman, you have allowed a little latitude to some other hon. members. We all love the hon. member for Cariboo, and I am sure there would be unanimous consent to giving him permission to ask his question.

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, I want to join with the spokesman for the official opposition and say that not only do we love the hon. member but we adore him.

The Chairman: I am sure that the love the committee has for the hon. member is also shared by the Chair. However, I should not like the good nature of the committee to give rise to an occasion to infringe the rules. If the minister will accept the question, the Chair will certainly allow it provided it is not taken as a precedent.

Mr. Balcer: Mr. Chairman, the official opposition may love the hon. member and the C.C.F. may adore him but the government will still keep him on our side. I will be very pleased to hear him.

Mr. Henderson: There is a lot of construction going on in the Cariboo and thousands of men are going in there. There is an airport at Dawson Creek, but the planes fly over and do not stop there. We want the planes to stop there. A \$400 million pipe line running out of that area is being built, and \$400 million is being spent on the big Bennett dam at Hudson Hope. Surely we are entitled to air services in a place like that where \$800 million is being spent. That is all I am going to say.

Mr. Pickersgill: Before the item carries, Mr. Chairman, may I say I am sure that if the quarter of a million dollars that is being spent on the other Dawson had been spent in Dawson Creek the hon. member's wishes could have been satisfied. But I know that is out of order. I am going to ask the minister something that really is in order. He said last night, as found on page 2100 of *Hansard*:

One of the main sources of revenue—

The reference is to this air line that is now being subsidized out of the treasury.

—was a mail contract. Unfortunately, this mail contract was terminated. I do not remember the exact date of its termination, but it was some time in 1960.