

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

It seems to me that when any major change in the transportation facilities affecting an area is contemplated, then it is just plain commonsense that the people of the area affected be consulted as to the advisability of the proposed changes. I understand that the municipalities of the area were never consulted about these changes or given an opportunity to express their views on the proposed changes in service.

Transportation services are vital to the growth of all areas. A cutback in any type of transportation service can do great harm to a district unless other forms of transport are substituted. Today, air transport is growing rapidly. There is expansion everywhere, for air travel is coming into its own. However, in the proposed schedule for travel and facilities as outlined for the Castlegar airport by the air transport commission, there is every indication of the present service being drastically curtailed. The schedule certainly was not drafted with a view to giving better service to an area with over 70,000 in population and which is expanding rapidly.

When the Canadian Pacific Railway closed out its passenger service over the Kettle Valley railway it indicated that it would provide good passenger service by air. There was really an obligation on Canadian Pacific and it did provide a fairly good service to the area. C.P.A. used a DC-6 which carried 84 passengers. It made two trips daily to Vancouver. It gave our district direct service to Calgary. This aircraft was able to carry express and freight where needed in fairly substantial amounts. The number of passengers leaving the Castlegar airport was on the increase, and sometimes the DC-6 had a full complement of passengers. This C.P.A. service provided meals to the passengers on the Vancouver and Calgary runs. This necessitated, of course, a very fine stewardess service on this C.P.A. run.

Now the air transport commission has offered our area an inferior service as far as I am concerned. We are to have service from B.C. Air Lines which will use 18-passenger planes. They will make three return trips per day to Vancouver and two trips to Cranbrook. We will lose our through service to Calgary. I understand there is no meal service, and of course there are no stewardesses on board. The carrying capacity out of Castlegar will never be able to meet the passenger demand. There will be lengthy waiting periods at Cranbrook for P.W.A. flights to Calgary.

[Mr. Harding.]

In addition to this, P.W.A. flights to Cranbrook will bypass the Castlegar airstrip with the Boeing 737, 95-passenger plane. The smaller 18-passenger planes are extremely limited in the amount of freight and express which can be handled. It is expected that they can provide a more continuous service to the airport than the larger planes, although the increased percentage of landings might well be disputed.

On the whole, the picture of air transport from Castlegar would seem to have been adversely affected by this move. Even the limousine service from the Castlegar airport will be affected. Now, limousine service runs to Nelson, Trail and Castlegar, and this service caters to a DC-6 capable of carrying 84 passengers. What kind of service will be provided for an 18-passenger plane which is partially loaded before ever reaching Castlegar? The answer is obvious; the limousine service will have to cease, and the air carrier service will receive another black eye.

Even the airport committee has been bypassed by the commission. Plans were in the offing to increase the capacity of the airport to handle 100 passengers at a time. An expenditure of \$150,000 was planned. This expansion will most likely have to be cancelled.

• (10:20 p.m.)

Time does not permit me to give all the details or background of the need for increased service; we do not want decreased service. These few remarks should show the need for immediate action and review by the Department of Transport. It is much easier to prevent a foolish error than to correct it once it has been made.

I urge that the transport department hold an immediate and complete review of the situation. May I suggest to the Minister of Transport that the following points should be given prompt attention. First, a formal hearing in the area concerning the proposed changes should be held. Second, a check on the carrying capacity of the aircraft to be used by the proposed carrier should be carried out. This point relates to both passengers and express. We should see if the capacity is inadequate. Third, there should be an examination of retrogression of service, of the lack of direct access to Calgary, of extended waiting periods at Cranbrook for aircraft to the east, and so on. Fourth, there ought to be an examination of the feasibility of limousine service at these centres. Will such service, which is dependent in part on passengers