

AIR TRANSPORT

USE OF STOL AIRCRAFT TO LINK REGIONAL AIRPORTS— NORDAIR OTTAWA-HAMILTON FLIGHT APPLICATION

Mr. Colin D. Gibson (Hamilton-Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport. Has the Minister of Transport made any decision on the probable use of short take-off and landing aircraft, sometimes known as STOL aircraft, for linking up regional airports? Second, is it possible that we will soon hear whether the Nordair application in regard to flights between Ottawa and Mount Hope has been granted?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the question of short take-off and landing aircraft, I can assure the hon. member that I am meeting with the industry, I believe within the next two days, because the industry has some proposals to make regarding STOL aircraft. On the matter of additional access to Ottawa from Hamilton, I am expecting a decision within a day or two and I have every reason to believe it will be favourable.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN CONSTITUTION

CONSULTATION BETWEEN OTTAWA AND QUEBEC RESPECTING SECTION 80

Mr. Henry Latulippe (Compton): Mr. Speaker, I have a question I wish to direct to the Prime Minister.

Following a decision made by the government of Quebec to introduce a bill to amend section 80 of the Canadian Constitution purporting to do away with the 17 "protected" constituencies without the agreement of the majority of members representing such electoral constituencies, I want to ask this question: has the government of Quebec consulted with the federal government on this issue? If so, has Ottawa agreed in principle that such an amendment be passed?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the second part of the question, I can give a negative answer. There was no consultation and so there was no agreement from the central government.

The first part of the question deals with a constitutional and legal matter. Personally, I would think that this is an amendment to the internal constitution of the province of Quebec and that, in accordance with the first paragraph of section 92 of the Constitution, that province would be justified in making this amendment without the consent of the federal government or of the British government.

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[English]

AIR TRANSPORT

FARES BASED ON CANADIAN DOLLAR PEGGED AT 92 CENTS—PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION FOR OVERCHARGING

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corpo-

Inquiries of the Ministry

rate Affairs. Now that the overcharging on Canadian fares for international travel has been removed by government involvement in the matter, will he follow up with the necessary action to ensure that compensation will be made available to Canadian consumers who were overcharged by some \$4.5 million?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, that is a matter in respect of which I will do what I did last time—refer it to my colleague, the Minister of Transport, who I am sure will be delighted to look into the problem.

TRANSPORT

PROPOSED INCREASE IN FREIGHT RATES ON POTATOES

Hon. Hugh John Flemming (Carleton-Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport and I should like to revert to the question of potatoes. Has the minister been advised that the very existence of the potato industry may be threatened, especially in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, by the serious increase not only in transportation rates but also in handling charges, demurrage charges and other associated expenses in getting potatoes to the export market? Will he also examine the situation with a view to attempting to find some means to avert the serious consequences to this industry and our export trade in general which these increased charges may bring about?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has submitted his question in the form of a representation and he has to assume that it will be noted by the minister.

FREIGHT RATE LEVEL IN PRAIRIE PROVINCES—ACTION TO REMOVE DISCRIMINATION

Mr. R. R. Southam (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, this appears to be a busy day for the Minister of Transport, and I too have a question for him. On November 4 I inquired of the minister what action the government was taking to rectify the problem of discriminatory high freight rates prevailing in western Canada. The minister replied that he had initiated talks with premiers and officials of the Prairie provinces with a view to obtaining their recommendations to improve this situation. Can the minister now advise the House on the progress, if any, that has been made toward solving this very serious problem?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am advised that as a result of the type of consultation to which I referred in my earlier reply to the hon. member there have been some satisfactory changes or improvements in freight rates in regard, for example, to potash. On the broader question, as a result of representations made by the western provinces a group from my department is proceeding to western Canada as early as we can find an appropriate date convenient to representatives there, and I would assume discussions will continue at that level immediately following the beginning of the new year.