

*Canadian Aviation Safety Board*

The time and effort put into the whole matter do not warrant the delay we have experienced over the past seven months. At the Dubin Commission there were 116 hearings, 350 witnesses gave testimony, there were 26,000 pages of oral testimony, and 30,000 pages of exhibits and other evidence.

Given the accidents of an extremely serious nature in air transportation over the last few weeks, this may be one of the more important pieces of legislation that Parliament will deal with in this session. The Minister called it a giant step. I think any nomenclature of that nature we could give to the Bill could not over estimate or over state the importance of the matter. Yet for the last seven months the Liberal House Leader has refused to bring the Bill before Parliament. Now, in the dying days, we are told that only two hours will be allowed for debate in the House. It must go through committee today and be reported back to the House tomorrow without debate. Is it any wonder that Opposition Parties balk at the heavy-handed, inconsiderate, partisan, and highly political way in which legislation is dealt with by the Government?

The aviation community wanted this Bill dealt with earlier. It did not want the ministerial advisory committee with members of the Canadian Air Transport administration on it taking the slower steps that were taken to hold the legislation up before it got to the House. In an unprecedented show of unanimity ten aviation associations told the Minister of Transport to implement Volume I of the CASB when it was released in May, 1981. Those bodies were the Air Transport Association of Canada, the Canadian Air Line Pilots Association, the Canadian Air Traffic Controllers Association, the Canada Air Line Flight Attendants Association, the Canadian Air Line Dispatchers Association, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association, the Royal Canadian Flying Clubs Association, L'Association des Gens de l'Air du Québec, and the Aircraft Operations Group.

There will necessarily be a number of bodies such as these which will want to speak on the Bill in committee. I am delighted to report that these associations, given the very short notice, have made a real effort, either to attend this afternoon on the assumption that, as we have agreed, we will put the Bill through the House this morning—they have agreed to attend, or have already submitted very interesting comments on the Bill.

Let me deal for a moment with the background of the Bill, Mr. Speaker. It is the result of the continuation of the Progressive Conservative Party's 1979 election campaign promise and its implementation by the former Minister of Transport, the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski). He probably contributed more to the competent government of Canada in that short time than any Minister of the Crown. He certainly accomplished more in the Department of Transport, prorated, than any Minister before or since. He was able to convince the Cabinet of the Right Hon. Member for Yellowhead (Mr. Clark) to appoint Mr. Justice Charles Dubin to a commission of Inquiry on aviation safety.

While he took definitive action and from that action came this legislation, he was not alone in recognizing the need. The Minister spelled out in some detail those who had looked at this matter before and indicated the need for this type of legislation. There were discussion papers from the Air Transport Association of Canada in 1977, and the Bill that the Minister mentioned, Bill C-40, which was not passed by the House.

I have to mention, as did the Minister, my colleague, the Hon. Member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall), who has long advocated a multi-mode safety board. I know he is particularly concerned with this Bill and I trust that he will speak on it. Like myself he is happy that we finally have a piece of legislation.

The question that obviously arises is whether we must wait for a Royal commission of inquiry on each subject, or a major catastrophe in each mode of transportation, before we finally get a similar body for marine and surface transportation.

● (1140)

The first report of the commission of inquiry headed by Mr. Justice Dubin, was tabled in May, 1981. The 63 recommendations in Volume 1 of that report dealt with the establishment of an independent Canadian Aviation Safety Board. A year later, in March, 1982, a leading editorial in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* dealt with the matter, and I quote from that editorial:

It is all the more necessary to create, as Justice Dubin recommends, an independent body, the Canadian Aviation Safety Board, to investigate aircraft accidents and safety practices.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, two years later, the legislation is being dealt with in this House. It is indeed a sorry record of this Government. In fairness here, I must point out that the fault lies very heavily on the Government House Leader, since I know that the present Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) tried repeatedly to have this matter brought forward in the past seven months. Indeed, he showed the courtesy to the members of the Standing Committee on Transport to apprise us of the steps he had taken, and to keep us posted along the way on what was happening.

Let me briefly deal with the substance of the Bill, Mr. Speaker. The Board will have jurisdiction over any aviation accident or incident within Canada. I define the word "incident" roughly as a situation which could or may have led to an accident. In addition the Board will have the right to cooperate with other jurisdictions where Canadian aircraft are involved in accidents or incidents outside Canada, and with the Department of National Defence in Canada. The Board will have the right to conduct public inquiries for the purpose of finding the causes and making recommendations, but, as the Minister said, not to apportion blame.

The Board will have the right to enter, inspect, seize and protect, and all of those things which the Minister mentioned, as part of its ability to carry on a proper investigation. I am a little upset that we have no idea of what the regulations will be. Obviously, much of what will happen will be carried out