

AIR SAFETY

INVESTIGATION OF NEAR-ACCIDENTS

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport; I hope we shall be acting on air safety a little faster than we are on the economy.

The minister is, of course, aware that two incidents occurred on the west coast, one in Vancouver in which a DC-8 and a DC-737 were involved in a near-miss situation, and another in Victoria in which a 737 and a Beechcraft nearly collided. Would the minister explain what action is being taken by his department with regard to investigating these events, and could he describe the effect of the government's restraint program on the reduction of the general level of air safety in the area?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): I am quite aware that there is a debate on the way investigations should be conducted following an accident or a near-miss. That is one of the major points in the Dubin inquiry, and I would have thought the hon. member would agree that it would be very wise to wait until we have the result of the extensive inquiry which the judge has been conducting.

Mr. Skelly: Madam Speaker, I would point out in relation to the Victoria incident that we have been waiting for years for radar to be put in place in Victoria. The problem is one of expense. But people have already been killed because of the lack of these facilities.

With regard to the business of reporting, the minister is aware that we are not only awaiting some kind of statement or separate investigation: he also promised at the time to give us a report on the incident involving the 737. We are still waiting for that. Basically, I would appreciate hearing something about the installation—

Madam Speaker: Order. I feel the hon. member should ask his question. There is no need for a long preamble, especially to a supplementary.

Mr. Skelly: Could the minister tell us when he might be prepared to report what occurred in this incident, what has occurred in connection with the 737 incident and, specifically, what he might be doing about radar installation at Victoria to prevent future incidents, regardless of what may happen at the inquiry?

Mr. Pepin: I will look into these two incidents immediately to find out whether the report of the inquiry is available. Members of the House are aware, of course, that every day there is improvement in the general equipment of our airports in Canada. Millions of dollars are being spent on that purpose. If the hon. member would like a list relating to airports in his own geographical area, I will be glad to provide him with one.

Oral Questions

AIR TRANSPORT

HALIFAX-MONTREAL ROUTE

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. In view of the cabinet's recent decision to award the Toronto-Halifax route to Eastern Provincial Airways—a decision which, by the way, I applaud—and in view of the fact that CP Air has refused to serve the Halifax-Montreal route, would the minister please tell us what steps he or his officials are taking to ensure that the Halifax-Montreal route, normally served by Eastern Provincial Airways, is served by CP Air or some other carrier in future?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): I am, of course, pleased that the hon. member is satisfied with the decision which was made by cabinet. Personally, I was rather sad that CP Air could not find its way clear to accept the compromise we had reached, particularly in view of the fact that at one point in time in the course of discussions with the parties we had the impression that they would.

On the subject of the Halifax-Montreal route which, as the hon. member will recall, EPA relinquished in the compromise we reached, I understand that Eastern Provincial Airways has asked the Transport Commission if it can continue to operate now that CPA does not appear to wish to do so. The Canadian Transport Commission has received this request and is communicating with the other parties, particularly with CPA, to see what they think of it.

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● (1440)

INDUSTRY

CANADA-U.S. AUTO PACT—PROPOSALS OF PRESIDENT CARTER

Mr. Otto Jelinek (Halton): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, and it deals with recent statements made in Detroit by President Carter regarding the ailing auto industry.

Could the minister inform this House whether he discussed the proposals set forth by the president during his recent meetings with U.S. officials in Washington; and if he has discussed President Carter's proposals—which I assume he must have—why has he not acted accordingly? Why are we taking a back seat again to every other country in the world as far as the auto industry is concerned?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, in our recent discussions in Washington we discussed a range of matters, including the areas covered by the president's statement. I have to tell my hon. friend that we had already begun acting on the same areas in our own country well before President Carter made his state-