

Oral Questions

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, we will make the announcement as soon as we have the right type of agreement for Canadian workers and the Canadian economy.

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, with this government we can wait forever for that announcement. Since success with the American government on this matter will depend ultimately on their decision, I would like to ask the minister a question with regard to this government's promises that we heard so much about earlier in the question period.

Since the Liberals promised to provide assistance in the way of funds for urban transit to Canadian municipalities, will the minister now assure the House that they will implement that promise, so that cities from Vancouver in the west to St. John's in the east will at least have money with which to buy urban transit facilities that are produced in Canada?

Mr. Gray: This is an important point, Madam Speaker. I will be discussing it with my colleagues, the Minister of Transport and the minister responsible for urban affairs.

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AIR TRANSPORTSTATUS OF TRANSPORT COMMISSION DECISION ON
HALIFAX-TORONTO ROUTE

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport, who I believe is also the acting prime minister.

Mr. Crosbie: Acting is right.

Mr. Crosby: The minister is aware of the decision made on April 9 of this year by the Canadian Transport Commission, whereby CP Air was granted permission to serve the Halifax-Toronto route and Eastern Provincial Airways was denied access to the same route.

The Toronto *Globe and Mail* said the decision demonstrated an "utterly lazy incomprehension of Canada's problems" and should be overturned by the cabinet. Will the minister confirm that the decision has been appealed, and to what authority? Will he also indicate when any such appeal will be heard and determined, and what considerations will be involved in the appeal process?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I can answer this question in part, for sure.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepin: First, one's view on the decision of the Canadian Transport Commission on this matter depends very much upon which region of Canada he comes from. I have heard varied views on the subject; some totally opposed, in fact.

Second, this decision has been appealed to cabinet, to the Minister of Transport. Third, all documents relevant to this appeal will, I believe, be filed by June 16. A decision by cabinet will then be made on the subject one way or the other.

Mr. Crosby: The minister referred to the views of the people in Atlantic Canada. I know he is aware that all four Atlantic premiers supported the position of Eastern Provincial Airways. Most members of Parliament from the Atlantic area, members of the legislatures and even municipal councils supported the position of Eastern Provincial Airways. I would ask the minister what relevance this has to the decision-making process of the Canadian Transport Commission: if they do not pay any attention to these kinds of representations, why do they hear them?

I would, at the same time, ask the minister to indicate if there is anything he can do to stop CP Air advertising the route as though the decision had already been taken on appeal, by advertising new and very competitive rates and the like.

Mr. Pepin: Madam Speaker, the views of the people of the Atlantic provinces have been taken into consideration by the CTC. These people, in great number, made representations to the CTC. Obviously, they will be taken into account by the government as well in the appeal procedure to which I referred a moment ago. Without appearing to take sides—I would not want to do that at this moment—a number of people from the maritimes have written to me indicating their agreement with the decision. Reference has been made to substantial travel which would take place to the maritimes from western Canada. So it is not a black and white situation, and that is why it will be a difficult decision to make.

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● (1140)

TRANSPORT

UPGRADING RAIL AND PORT FACILITIES—COST-SHARING

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Madam Speaker, my question, too, is addressed to the Minister of Transport. It will take him from the east coast to the west coast, where he has spent a lot of time negotiating with the province of British Columbia in an attempt to reach an agreement by June 10 with respect to the improvement of certain infrastructures which will facilitate the transportation of northeast coal to export markets.

Is the minister in a position today to tell the House what assurances he has been able to give the British Columbia government, whose representatives are leaving for Japan to sign coal deals, that the federal government will live up to the commitment made by the former government, namely, to share in the cost of extending certain sections of the British Columbia Railway and upgrading the facilities of the CNR and certain port facilities to bring about these objectives?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I am glad it is now recognized that I am doing my job with respect to the west coast. Thank you very much. The situation is this: on May 5 a number of members of this cabinet were in Victoria and had a long discussion with the committee on economic development of that province. At that