

The minister in charge of the wheat board has failed to carry out that commitment in spite of the fact that the producers on the Saskatchewan Natural Products Marketing Council carried out a plebiscite which indicated 93 per cent support for keeping the Canadian Wheat Board as the sole marketing agency for feed grains. That may be why the minister in charge of the wheat board refused to carry out his responsibility and commitment. When he saw the result of the vote of the Saskatchewan producers on that issue, he cut and ran.

The minister did carry out the results of a vote one time. That is what I call shifting, or being shifty. That vote was with regard to whether rapeseed should be under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board. The minister in charge of the wheat board handled that cutely. He sent a ballot to all producers. Instead of it having the usual yes or no, it had yes, no, or no opinion. In order to ensure that the rapeseed producers would not vote to have rapeseed under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board, the minister counted all "no opinion" ballots as "no". When the results were tallied, the minister was able to shift responsibility. The producers voted, he said. Is that what you call a responsible exercise of ministerial responsibility? I do not think so.

With regard to railway passenger service, particularly transcontinental service, the minister made a policy announcement which in effect said that we will have only one transcontinental passenger train. In order to take the heat off, the minister asked the railway committee of the Canadian Transport Commission to carry out hearings across Canada with regard to transcontinental railway passenger trains. However, in the terms of reference there was a little fence put around them, saying they will consider the various alternatives to a transcontinental passenger train.

The minister is neatly trying to shift responsibility for his policy announcement to the Canadian Transport Commission, and he worked it in such a way that the Commission could report back on various questions concerning one trans-continental passenger train rather than two. It work very well. It suits the minister's purpose very well. He has been able to shift political and ministerial responsibility from his own neck to the railway committee of the Canadian Transport Commission.

● (2110)

The beauty of it is he has not only done that with the CTC. He is the boy who did a lot of talking about rail line abandonment and the political heat got heavy so he appointed a commission headed by Mr. Justice Hall. He is the boy who opened the whole thing up about reviewing the Crowsnest pass rates. It was not any other political party or any farm organisation. Then he appointed the Snavely Commission. Again he shifts the heat and the responsibility, and while those organizations are meeting and carrying out their tasks the minister continues to make decisions which come under the purview of those various inquiries. The beauty of it for the Minister of Transport is that he can take credit for it if it works, and continue to shift the blame to these other commissions and boards if it does not.

This is another reason for my supporting the motion. I do not think that is a proper or responsible exercise of minis-

Ministerial Responsibility

terial responsibility. If you have made a political and philosophic decision, you have made it. And then you see to it that it is implemented. You don't try to look around in ten directions at one time or shift the heat to other public bodies or to public servants.

The same thing has been occurring in the past several days in connection with the dispute between the government and the air traffic controllers. The House should remember some of the history of this matter. It was not the Government of Canada, it was not the Minister of Transport or his predecessor, or the minister before that, who said there should be bilingualism among air traffic controllers. It was the air traffic controllers themselves who were responsible for taking the initiative in 1974 because of the failure of successive ministers of transport to set out proper regulations governing air traffic control, particularly small aircraft using smaller airports.

In 1962 the ministry directed that French might be used by air traffic controllers only in emergencies and an immediate translation must be made into English.

In 1971 a transport study found no major problems about air traffic control in English, though some private flyers required additional assistance in French. For this reason the informal use of French in air traffic control proceeded without authorization. In other words, air traffic controllers themselves, when someone needed assistance in the second language, gave it.

Even though the air line pilots and the controllers repeatedly requested the ministry to put some regulation and order into this process, nothing was done. Finally, in 1974, the air traffic controllers proposed that limited bilingual air traffic control for visual flight rules, meaning lowflying planes, be allowed to apply at Quebec airports where traffic was light and there was no significant mix of high-speed jets with small craft.

I do not want to hear the Minister of Transport or any other member of the government trying to take credit for bilingualism being brought into five airports. It was the air traffic controllers themselves who initiated that move, and to their credit. It was the air traffic controllers who started using French informally. All this is in the ministry's own report if hon. members would care to check on it. In June, 1974, bilingual traffic control was used for visual flight regulation. It was authorized then by the ministry following the example of the air traffic controllers for the airports of Quebec City, St. Jean, Baie Comeau, Sept-Îles and St. Honoré.

By March of 1975 the MOT task force called Project Bilcom presented 23 recommendations related to the use of language at airports. That report was presented to the House on May 22 last year. The majority report, with only one dissenting voice, found there was no demand for wider bilingual service. It recommended that air traffic control under instrument flight rules remain English only, that visual flight rules above 9,500 feet provide for English only and that bilingual visual flight be restricted to the five airports in the province of Quebec.

Some aviation personnel in Quebec referred the findings of the report to the Commissioner of Official Languages. Mr. Spicer, in a letter to the Ministry of Transport, recommended that the minister continue to consult with all