

Air Transport Policy

I think the minister would do well to broaden the terms of reference of this review or feasibility study to include study of this formula.

I also expected a statement to be forthcoming this morning in connection with the policy announcement that was made in regard to the current status of Air Canada. I expected the minister to comment on the current power play going on at the senior management level of Air Canada, the departure of a number of vice-presidents and, indeed, the departure of the president. The minister might have enlightened us on the future senior management structure of the organization, which I understand is being placed under review. In addition, he might also have indicated the ways and means in which, as a result of his discussions with Mr. Pratte to which he referred in the House yesterday, the government and indeed the management of Air Canada would see fit to take steps to improve morale within the organization, the need for which is apparent to every person who uses the facilities of Air Canada.

We on this side of the House contend there is a genuine lack of leadership in the operations of Air Canada. We think the government should take heed of this and look into the matter immediately—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski:—if, as the minister has suggested, the role of Air Canada is to be pre-eminent. The minister might also have elaborated upon, or cleared the air with respect to, the chairman's suggestion that competition in the airline industry is bad and that good service and profitable operations cannot be achieved in unison.

All of these matters are of concern to the Canadian people. They are of concern to those who in the past have supported Air Canada and those who continue to support the role of Air Canada but are desirous of supporting it only if Air Canada does a little housecleaning and makes up its mind whether it is going to be an airline serving the needs of Canadian passengers or an operation which is going to diversify into the aerospace and allied industries. We should point out here and now that Air Canada must soon recognize that its prime concern in Canada is to serve the travelling needs of Canadians.

● (1120)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: Second, I believe the time has come when it must recognize that its employees must be treated as people and not as machines. Certainly we can do a lot to rectify the low morale in the corporation if this fundamental principle is taken into consideration.

The minister said in his statement:

In addition, of course, the government expects Air Canada to perform a special role as a model corporation in such fields as decentralization, bilingualism, and labour and technological change.

As for decentralization, I would ask the minister to talk to the people in Winnipeg about this and explain it to them. Having regard to labour, the minister should talk to the employees of Air Canada. In respect of technological

change, if the minister is referring to Comstock International—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have to interrupt the hon. member to remind him that the provisions of the Standing Order state that comments made in response to ministerial statements ought to be brief. I appreciate the importance of the matter but I hope the hon. member will give some thought to coming to the end of his statement.

Mr. Mazankowski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have almost completed my statement, but I should say to you and the House that the minister's statement is of grave importance to Canada and was rather lengthy. In order to cover all the areas touched upon in the statement I find I must deal with the various points relative to the matters presented. Nevertheless, I am almost finished.

I suggest there is very little in the statement that is new in regard to policy. The only new thing of importance today is the designation of landing rights at Milan for Canadian Pacific Airlines and the designation of Yugoslavia for Air Canada, which we have long awaited.

The minister pointed out that the success of the airline industry is dependent upon co-operation and it will only be developed and strengthened through such co-operation. I believe it is fair to say that the growth of the airline industry and its success in Canada has been achieved through co-operation. I only hope that in the future we can count on the co-operation of the government because the future growth of the industry is dependent upon government policy. It is my hope that the minister will be making further announcements in respect of his three-part policy in the very near future.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I too want to thank the minister for kindly sending a copy of his statement to this party an hour or more in advance of the House sitting, but I am afraid that is about all for which I can thank him.

I offered to make bets with the minister as long as two or three years ago on where some of these routes would go and I know now why he did not call me on them.

The New Democratic Party still believes that because of Canada's geography, its thinly scattered population and the overriding fact that transportation is an essential public service, this industry should be a public utility and publicly owned. The Canadian Pacific Railway system in our opinion has no business in this entire scheme of things, but we will have to leave that until another day when we have an NDP government.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, in view of the noises I hear to my right and the noises I heard from the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) as to the glories of private enterprise airlines, I should like to ask the hon. member and the minister where private enterprise and the Canadian Pacific were in the 1930's when the people of Canada, through their own air service, built up the airline system of this country. As soon as Air Canada became viable and profitable, private enterprise decided it wanted some of the gravy. Ever since then private carriers, in particular Canadian Pacific, have been handed lucrative