

Transportation Accident Investigation Board

The person read the document and said: "Oh, yeah, I know what caused it. It is obvious from this document. It says here that in light of the DC-8 crash in Gander, Newfoundland, they should not allow live ammunition to get on board airplanes any more".

In other words, it was the accidental explosion of such ammunition that had caused the air crash. That is what I read from that United States military document. Is that what caused the crash in question? I do not know. I say to you, Madam Speaker, that that possible theory, that evidence which is in the hands of the Canadian Aviation Safety Board, does not form part of the conclusion that the Board made. It is interesting to note that in the minority report there is reference to the fact that it could have been an explosion on board that caused the crash of the plane in question.

Mr. Belsher: On what evidence?

Mr. Boudria: I thought I just read to the Hon. Member across the way a letter from the United States military. Perhaps I could provide him with a copy of it. The Member across the way asks: "On what evidence?" I could ask the very same question in regard to the majority report of the Canadian Aviation Safety Board. As a matter of fact, I am not the only one who questions that evidence. On March 8, 1989, the Minister called a press conference and basically said that he supported the majority report of the Board and that he was going to implement a number of measures to fix things up. At that same press conference I said that the Minister should have questioned not only the recommendations of the report but the report itself. The Minister said that there was nothing wrong with the report, that there was no reason to question it. A few days later *The Ottawa Citizen* got hold of an internal report from the Minister's office which stated the same thing that I was saying and the exact opposite of what the Minister was saying.

It stated that in fact the theory of ice on the wings was questionable, if not to say not supportable at all; that there could have been a number of other things that caused the air crash; and that in the view expressed in the internal document from the Minister's office there seemed to have been a kind of bent to the report of only exploring that theory rather than other possible theories. I cannot say what caused the crash in question, nor am I

an investigator, but I can read documents. I know when the Minister's own staff is questioning a report. I know when the United States military has documents, copies of which I have, which allude albeit in an indirect way to a possible other cause, that there is indeed a possibility that there were other causes for this tragic air crash.

After the document from the Minister's Department became public, what happened? The Assistant Deputy Minister in charge of the Department that was producing the document was fired, or forced to resign. Thus General Lafrance resigned his position as Assistant Deputy Minister of Transport.

The Minister called another press conference. This time with all due respect he was a little less arrogant than at the one on March 8 in which he was condemning the Opposition for asking the questions that it was asking. It was quite an exercise. The Minister was eating humble pie at the press theatre across the street. He described that he would have an investigation into the Dryden air crash and that he would commission a judge as a form of consultant in order to determine whether there should be an inquiry into the Gander crash. Now why should we have an inquiry to determine whether there should be an inquiry? I am not sure. But to that end Justice Estey was appointed. He is an eminent judge. I have no difficulty with the qualifications of the individual except that he is not a Royal Commission of Inquiry. As a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, there is no mechanism by which I know that I, as a Member of Parliament, could even give a copy of the letter that I have just read to you to Judge Estey. The families of the victims at Gander have asked to provide information, to make requests, to make a brief, to submit items to Judge Estey. It was not possible for them to do so.

• (1610)

I have a briefing book here, Madam Speaker, which contains several hundred pages of material on Gander. I would like at least to give a copy of it to Judge Estey, as I have to a number of Members of this House. It is not even possible for me to do that under the structure that was established by the Minister of Transport. So I say to you, Madam Speaker, there are many things more that need to be done.