

now, as a working hypothesis, a three-point analysis, the essential goal of which is to bring the whole question back to a level where reason will prevail over all other considerations:

- 1) Given the circumstances existing for several weeks at the Dorval Control Centre, the two suspensions seemed inevitable. Even though, in ground-to-ground communications, certain interested parties assess in varying degrees the importance of the purely linguistic factor in air safety, our investigation reveals that the general climate of indiscipline at the Control Centre at the time of the suspension was a very clear threat to air safety.
- 2) The suspended employees (Messrs. S. Cormier and R. Buisson), and their superiors (Messrs. M. Pitre and L. Desmarais), were all to a certain extent victims of a situation which had been allowed to deteriorate for too long; indeed, the suspended persons were working in an atmosphere where insults and provocations between certain anglophones and certain francophones were commonplace: consequently, one can reasonably believe that the thoughtless behaviour of the suspended persons may have been the result of exasperation, tension, as well as perplexity about the often uneven application of sometimes ambiguous directives in the past. These same circumstances obliged the two supervisors to enforce regulations in conditions which, no doubt, were very distressing to them personally and which led them to carry the blame, in a certain part of the press, unjustly in my opinion, for having taken an unpopular decision.
- 3) Since the department will announce today that it will be in a position, at the beginning of January, to evaluate a study now in progress which seems to offer serious hope that French may be used in certain ground-to-ground communication it might find it useful to consider softening the financial effects of the two sanctions as a freely decided gesture to lower tensions. In my view, such a gesture would constitute neither a defeat nor a victory for anyone, nor would it give other employees a licence to commit acts of indiscipline affecting air safety while a solution is being worked out in short order.

Indeed, even though my mandate is to defend linguistic equality, I consider that the safety of passengers and aircrew must not in the slightest way be jeopardized by any political consideration. The problem now is simply to find a realistic procedure allowing us, if only briefly, to take the politics out of an issue that in the final analysis is technical in nature and, in my opinion, must be settled on technical grounds. At bottom, all the interested parties, be they anglophones or francophones, controllers, pilots or departmental specialists, state that their attitudes on language use are based solely on concern for air safety. I believe that Canadians expect all these professionals to explain the soundness of their respective positions through objective arguments. Plainly, this will be possible only if the Ministry manages to establish the climate of serenity which is one of the principal goals of the steps we have taken and of the present letter.

I would appreciate receiving any comments you may have at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Spicer