

Supply—Transport

it is now known, has been transferred from Winnipeg. I believe the present Minister of Transport knows that any number of representations have been made to the present government and were made to the former government about this matter and more recently about the transfer of the repair base.

Not only did Liberal candidates, not only did Liberal newspapers, promise that this government would take action, but the Prime Minister said on November 22, 1963, in this house:

For at least as far ahead as planning now extends, that is at least ten years, the Winnipeg facilities will continue to be used.

My colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre asked on that day whether the facilities would not be nibbled away as had been the case during the last few years. The Prime Minister interjected to say:

It may be increased.

The former minister of transport stated:

I would hope it would be maintained and probably increased, but I cannot be precise on the matter at the moment.

The government appointed one man, a very competent person from Winnipeg, Mr. Thompson, to make inquiries into what should be done. I do not know why that report is not yet available. However, I want to tell the minister that if it is not available shortly and if the minister does not take some action quickly, the whole matter will be academic because the fact is that Mr. McGregor has continued to ignore the statement of policy made by the Prime Minister from the day it was made. Long service employees of Air Canada, from the day the Prime Minister made that statement of policy, have continued to be transferred from Winnipeg to Montreal. The result is that there are now many more people working at the base in Winnipeg who are temporary employees, in other words, they are new employees, while people with 10 or 15 years of service with Air Canada have been transferred to Montreal.

I want to say that I have never seen such arrogance, such complete repudiation of government policy by a civil servant as has been exhibited by Mr. McGregor. I want to say to the minister that if he does not intend to take any action, and it does not seem to me he has taken any action, Mr. McGregor will have a somewhat difficult time when he comes before the committee.

At the time of the discussion of the decimation of the base in Winnipeg the government

[Mr. Orlikow.]

promised it would adopt other policies to make Winnipeg a regional air centre. Recently the government of Canada concluded an agreement with the government of the United States with regard to air routes. One would have expected, in the light of the promises made by the Prime Minister and by successive ministers of transport, that consideration would have been given to helping Winnipeg make up the loss of the repair base by increasing the air routes which are used to fly into and out of Winnipeg. The exact opposite is true. The new air routes agreement between Canada and the United States makes no provision for increased flights from Winnipeg to the United States.

The *Winnipeg Free Press* said in an editorial of January 3, 1966, which I commend to the minister because I am sure he has been a lot friendlier to them than I have been, but I do not know how he will feel after he reads what they are saying about his policies:

The new air route agreement between Canada and the United States is a bitter disappointment to western Canada and confirms what many people feared would happen during the two-year negotiations: The American carriers have been far more successful in putting spine into their government's negotiators than have their opposite numbers in Canada.

I should like to interject that I do not believe it is possible to put spine into this government or into this minister. One would have hoped that, as an old resident of Manitoba and coming from a have-not province as he does, he would have given some consideration to a have-not province like Manitoba. The consideration, I feel, has been virtually nil. The editorial continues:

From the west's standpoint the agreement is a total loss. In the whole vast region between Toronto and the Pacific coast not a single Canadian air line will be permitted to offer trans-border services. Even at the west coast the only gain will be a competitive service between Vancouver and San Francisco—presumably to be awarded to Canadian Pacific—and in return for this an American air line is to have a monopoly on the Vancouver-Los Angeles run.

Failure of the Canadian negotiators to obtain a Winnipeg-Chicago franchise means that the revolutionary criterion suggested by Professor J. K. Galbraith in his report to the two governments two years ago—that convenience of the travelling public be the principal consideration of allocating routes—has been almost completely ignored. Western travellers wishing to go to Chicago will continue to have to double-back from Toronto or else patronize the milk-run, many-stop service offered by an American carrier via Minneapolis.

• (4:30 p.m.)

Mr. Pickersgill: I am sure the hon. gentleman does not want to be factually inaccurate