

[Translation]

**Mr. J.-A. Mongrain (Trois-Rivières):** Mr. Speaker, I think I would fail in my duty if I did not take advantage of the discussion of bill C-7 to submit certain requests on behalf of my constituents about a situation which concerns them. It is rather reluctantly that I do so, because if the government were to comply with every wish of the members, it would cost millions of dollars. But my grievance will not cost anything to anybody if only certain solutions I am going to suggest were applied. I shall not resume the discussion with regard to the CNR, because it is with Air Canada that I should like to deal.

It is rumoured that Air Canada is about to discontinue its stops at Trois-Rivières, the main city in my constituency. We have a fine air strip and terminal and every morning a plane coming from Quebec stops at Trois-Rivières, flies through to Montreal and then to Ottawa. In the evening an Air Canada plane flies back in the opposite direction.

• (8:50 p.m.)

This service is very convenient, all the more as in the last few days, the members of the area have learned they will have to use that means of transportation because the train schedule has been so disrupted that it will be impossible to reach Ottawa in time without starting the day before.

The reason alleged for discontinuing the service is that it is not profitable and that only four or five passengers, on average use it every day. In this connection, I should like to make representations to the Canadian Transport Commission. I shall do so skeptically because I do not have much confidence.

Opposition members will perhaps think I am giving my adversaries an opening in saying that I rely more or less on the constant objectivity of some officials of the Canadian Transport Commission, but I say it anyway because my constituents will be annoyed if I miss this opportunity.

If the service is not profitable in Trois-Rivières, it is because the company does not make any publicity whatsoever. I had the opportunity on several occasions to note that some people from my area—with a population of some 325,000 inhabitants—going for example, to Western Canada, Florida or Europe, were driven to Montreal to catch a plane. I told them: After all, a plane leaves Trois-Rivières every morning. And they used to answer: But we were not aware of it!

#### *Provision of Moneys to CNR and Air Canada*

Before discontinuing that service, Air Canada should launch an intensive publicity campaign, in order to inform the greatest possible number of travellers in the area about its services. In fact, I am greatly interested in flying and I think that Air Canada would be surprised to find out the number of potential passengers in Trois-Rivières.

I would, at least, like to ask that the Air Canada service not be discontinued before there is another one to replace it. Let us give to a company that uses smaller planes perhaps the necessary permit to serve the Trois-Rivières area.

I know that some companies would be interested in providing service to Sherbrooke, Trois-Rivières, the Lac Saint-Jean area, Quebec City and Montreal. I think it is fairly important for the people of my region numbering 325,000 not to be brutally deprived of the service presently provided by Air Canada.

Apart from the passenger service provided by Air Canada, the meteorological service will necessarily be discontinued at the airport. The meteorological service is quite convenient for our business concerns and also for the air clubs in the Trois-Rivières area, which are quite prosperous, dynamic and active.

I therefore urge on behalf of the three municipalities of my constituency and in the name of several associations which expressed the wish that I bring this grievance to the attention of those concerned, that the Air Canada service in Trois-Rivières should not be cancelled before an extensive publicity campaign has been launched so that all long-distance travellers may be aware that an airplane leaves Trois-Rivières at 9 a.m. and that another one returns around 6.30 or 7 p.m. Several other passengers may be thus recruited. This service should at least not be discontinued before another one has been substituted for it.

I am going to say once more something that will seem trite: that we are so deeply involved in the age of aviation, considering progress achieved, that it would be retrograding to abolish, in a city which is the main centre of its region, a service that is of the greatest importance to contractors or businessmen who have to travel long distances with great speed.

I strongly urge that this service be maintained. I will have the opportunity to raise this matter again and I hope that I will have more luck with the Canadian Transport Commission than I had when I requested that the