

Air Canada

the 49th parallel and beyond that shows that those corporations, which are truly Canadian in their commitment, do maintain those objectives and maintain them rather well.

I appreciate this opportunity to address a few words in debate on this particular Bill. As one who, like yourself, Mr. Speaker, from time to time has the occasion to use Air Canada, I have nothing but admiration for the quality of the people, for the safety standards and for all the wonderful service that this airline has delivered to Canada over the past 51 years. I am sure it will do so well into the next century, with the assistance of this Bill and the bringing up of capital so that the investment will be there for Air Canada to expand its fleet and to be a truly distinguished airline.

Mr. Minaker: Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a question with the Hon. Member for Edmonton South (Mr. Edwards) in regard to services to the northern part of Alberta provided by different airlines, either now or in the past. The Hon. Member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) and, I believe, the Hon. Member for Grand Falls—White Bay—Labrador (Mr. Rompkey) seemed to imply, when they made their comments, that Air Canada was servicing all the remote areas and that when the company was privatized this service would fall off.

● (1700)

In my Province of Manitoba the airline that was covering the remote areas like Thompson, The Pas, and Gillam many years ago was TransAir which became Pacific Western Airlines and which we now know is an integral part of Canadian Airlines. I believe that that company is servicing the remote areas. In fact, Air Canada was primarily servicing the main areas like Thunder Bay, Toronto, Montreal and so on.

I would like to ask the Member for Edmonton South, who serves the remote areas of northern Alberta at the present time? Is it Air Canada or other airlines?

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to advise my friend that it is indeed largely the investor-owned airlines which serve northern Alberta. That is partly due to historic circumstance. Others who remember the bush pilot era would say that it is partly due to historical circumstance.

However, the fact of the matter is that Canadian Airlines International, as the heir of Pacific Western Airlines, has regular Airbus service to Fort McMurray out of Edmonton. Canadian Airlines International flies as well into certain parts of northwestern Alberta to such destinations as Grand Prairie and into the Peace River block of northeastern British Columbia to Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, and Fort Nelson. In fact, Fort St. John has become something of a mini air hub, with the routes from Edmonton northwest and Vancouver northeast intersecting there with flights from both cities continuing on into White Horse.

It is true as well that Edmonton, being historically and presently the gateway to the North in an aviation and a shipping context, still maintains that claim with regular flights

by such airlines as Canadian out of Edmonton International and Edmonton Municipal, in some cases, to the North, notably to Yellowknife, Cambridge Bay, Resolute, and other northern destinations.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct several questions to the Hon. Member. The suggestion by Conservative Members of Parliament who are supporting this Bill is that the opposition which comes from New Democratic Members is based on our ideological belief in the value of public ownership as opposed to private ownership.

Certain people in the industry are very critical of this particular Bill. For example, in *The Globe and Mail* of May 27 there is a news story quoting Sir Colin Marshall, chief executive of British Airways which, as the Member knows, was privatized by Mrs. Thatcher. The article says:

In reference to the federal Government's decision to partly privatize Air Canada, Sir Colin indicated he doesn't like Ottawa's method very much.

British Airways would never have achieved the outstanding financial results of the past year if the British Government had continued as the majority shareholder, he said.

"It obviously depends on the local situation, but as a general philosophy I believe you can't be both (government and privately owned), he said—

I would like the Member to comment on that and also on the financial analyst in Toronto specializing in airlines who, the day after the Minister tabled this Bill, criticized this proposal. He said that if the privatized company has to follow the provisions in the Bill, if the headquarters must remain in Montreal, if it must continue to be bilingual, and must maintain its maintenance bases in Toronto, Winnipeg, and Montreal, it would take away from the ability of the partially privatized company to make decisions based on efficiency and profitability.

This analyst, whose name I do not have in front of me now, made the same point as the head of British Airways. Even though they believe in the privatization of Air Canada, they say that what the Government is proposing to do is bad in a business way. I would like the Member to comment on those points.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, as always the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North, with his immense fund of general knowledge, is able to ask some very pertinent questions. He has never let us down.

On the question of ideology, I was not suggesting that the New Democratic Party had a particular ideology and that his opposition to this particular move was based on ideology. I was saying that the Government's move in this regard is not based on ideology.

Mr. Orlikow: It's not based on good, sound business sense.

Mr. Edwards: It's based on good, sound business sense. I thank the Hon. Member for that phrase.

In response to Sir Colin Marshall's comments which I, too, read, the Hon. Member was honest enough to quote Sir Colin