

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 9, 1972

The House met at 11 a.m.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

AIR TRANSPORT

HIJACKING—CANADIAN ROLE IN SECURING ACTION BY UNITED NATIONS TO OBTAIN UNIVERSAL AGREEMENT ON EXTRADITION OF HIJACKERS

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister not only as Acting Prime Minister but also in his capacity as Secretary of State for External Affairs. It is a very serious question. In addition to the terms of the Tokyo, The Hague, and the Montreal conventions, would the minister advise the House what role Canada is taking in having the Security Council of the United Nations get all nations together, whether they are signatories to these conventions or not, to obtain a world-wide and universal agreement that extradition proceedings will apply to all hijackers and that no one will harbour hijackers or retain ransom money contrary to the conventions in question and the wishes of the majority of nations that want to bring an end to the ever-increasing, terrible, frightening, crime of hijacking?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I entirely agree with the sentiments expressed by the hon. gentleman. It has been the purpose of the Canadian government to make hijacking a non-profitable enterprise and to do everything possible to get universal agreement that hijackers will be brought to justice. Unfortunately, not all countries in the world are signatories to the necessary conventions. We intend to be fully participating as soon as the legislation has been approved by this session of Parliament. We are now negotiating, for example, an agreement with Cuba, which is not a signatory to the universal conventions but has indicated an interest in having a convention with us.

• (1110)

Mr. Woolliams: In view of the fact that the pilots association, not only of Canada but of the world, has asked the United Nations Security Council to take an active part in obtaining an agreement, is Canada doing anything through the Security Council to get an agreement of those nations which are not signatories to the three conventions I mentioned in my first question? I am asking the government what action it is taking internationally in that regard.

Mr. Sharp: We are trying to take the most effective action we can in this respect. It is not easy because, as the

hon. gentleman knows, his views are not entirely in accord with those of all countries. We are not a member of the Security Council, but I can say here that if the Security Council should take this matter under advisement it would please Canada.

IMPOSITION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT ON HIJACKERS WHO KILL PILOTS OF PLANES

Mr. Eldon M. Williams (Calgary North): In view of the fact that the new amendments to the Criminal Code dealing particularly with hijacking define the pilot in command of an aircraft as a peace officer, will the government now, without evasion or equivocation, state its policy with regard to a person who is convicted of murder by due process of the law, and who has also committed the crime of hijacking a plane, so far as the application of the penalty of capital punishment is concerned? In other words, if a hijacker kills the pilot in command of a plane, will capital punishment apply to him as a fact—we know that in law it does—and will this government see that it is carried out?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): I am quite sure that a question like this asking for a decision on a hypothetical case is not one that I could answer at this time. I can assure the hon. gentleman that we abhor the crime of hijacking as much as he does. We are trying to take whatever action we can, and I think are as effective as any other country in the world in dealing with this question.

HIJACKING—CONSULTATION WITH CANADIAN PILOTS ASSOCIATION REGARDING POSSIBLE BOYCOTT OF NATIONS HARBOURING HIJACKERS

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): Can the Acting Prime Minister, in the absence of the Minister of Transport, say whether or not he is aware if the government has been in consultation with the Canadian Airline Pilots Association regarding a possible boycott of those nations now harbouring hijackers?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): I know that my colleague, the Minister of Transport, has been in frequent consultation with the airline pilots, and I will ascertain whether there has been any recent discussion on this particular point.

HIJACKING—ALLOCATION OF FUNDS TO PROVIDE SECURITY MEASURES

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): Can the Acting Prime Minister say whether or not the government has given high priority to the allocation of funds to provide comprehensive security measures in Canada?