

Adjournment Debate

I will now deal with the difficulty of communications. As taxpayers have been advised, if they require information of any kind they should contact their local district offices. The tax guide provides them with the address of each district office and with various telephone numbers they should use, depending on the nature of their inquiry. The Department, through the district offices, handles millions of telephone inquiries each year and handles hundreds of thousands of inquiries over the counter.

Most general questions can be answered by reference to the extensive informational literature that is made available. Most of the questions the taxpayer has about his own affairs can be answered at the district office, because the staff in every district office has access to the central computer records at Ottawa through computer terminals, with which each district office is equipped. In a small minority of the case it is necessary to obtain the taxpayer's file from the taxation centre.

The actual time involved for the vast majority of the files requested by the Hamilton district office from Sudbury is normally five days and not the six weeks as the Hon. Member suggested.

He also speaks of business people, tax accountants and taxpayers who phone Sudbury and get a recorded message in response. There must be some confusion here. To begin with, since direct phone contacts with taxpayers are to be handled by the district offices, only a minimal provision for phone service is made in the taxation centres. For this reason it has not been necessary to have recourse to recorded messages in the taxation centres of the kind which are in common use in many organizations with a high volume of phone business.

The Department is constantly trying to improve communications. To this end, the directors of the Sudbury taxation centre and of the Hamilton district office will be meeting with representatives of the accounting profession in Hamilton in the near future to hear about the problems they have had and to see if there are some ways in which they could be removed or at least reduced.

In closing, the Department wants to hear about particular specific problems in communications. I emphasize "specific", because the general charges of the kind the Hon. Member has made are not really helpful, particularly when, as in this instance, they appear to run at variance with the facts.

[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORT—QUEBECAIR 2—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jean-Guy Dubois (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, on December 1, I asked the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) about the status of Quebecair or perhaps I should say about the Quebecair 2 affair. Some time ago, many people were saying that the Canadian Transport Commission and the Canadian Government were to blame for the problems of Quebecair, because they were not allocating any routes to Quebecair and were indulging in unfair competition through

Air Canada, and so forth. Comparisons were being drawn with Nordair, with people saying that Nordair was getting a better deal than Quebecair. A Parti Québécois member from my area, the member for Arthabasca, even sent me a letter saying that Nordair was an Ontario-based company!

• (2220)

Mr. Speaker, I would like to clarify a few points regarding the present situation of Quebecair, to know what is going on. Perhaps I should recall for the benefit of some people who are not familiar with the situation, that both Nordair and Quebecair were started by Quebecers in 1947, Nordair being based in the Lac Saint-Jean area, the heartland of Quebec, and Quebecair in Rimouski. Today, Nordair still has its headquarters in Montreal. Nordair was asked to develop routes in Northwestern Quebec, while Quebecair was to do the same east of Montreal. The situation with regard to Quebecair is indeed unfortunate, especially for the company's employees whose jobs are at stake as a result of Quebecair's financial difficulties, but there are other intervenors in this case who have helped to create this situation, because I think that the interest shown by Minister Pepin, more specifically on November 22—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): I am sorry to interrupt the Hon. Member, but he must refer to the Members of this House by their Department, not by name.

Mr. Dubois: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your comments and I realize they are based on many years of experience in this House. The Minister of Transport, the Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin.

As I was saying, both companies were asked to develop routes, and the fact that today, after 35 years, Quebecair is experiencing problems, is due to the fact that some quite incredible things have happened. One of the facts which I want to straighten out this evening, Mr. Speaker, is the allegation that Quebecair never had its place in the sun nor the chance to state its views on air transport matters when it had come upon the chance of developing certain routes, and that every time Quebecair had applied for routes east of Montreal, it had always been given that right by the Canadian Transport Commission.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, many people have complained that this company did not obtain its share of subsidies from the Government of Canada or from the Canadian Transport Commission. They were saying that Quebecair was getting only \$400,000 a year and that it had received nothing in the past. However, we should tell Quebecers that the Department of Transport has in its records that since 1966, when a subsidization policy was drawn up, Quebecair received a total of \$7.5 to \$10 million from the Government of Canada. Those moneys were granted with no strings attached contrary to the Quebec Government which obtained from Quebecair in return for its