

*National Air Policy*

one? We should ask ourselves the following question: In whose hands will Nordair finally land? I would like to know why there was no co-operation between the federal government and Quebec which has a thick file on Nordair. There had been contacts between Nordair management and Quebec government officials. However, they were not ready to take over Nordair. As concerns private enterprise, particularly Quebecair, it appealed the decision of the Canadian Transport Commission.

If the federal government really wants Nordair to stay in the hands of private enterprise, why did it contribute to eliminate Quebecair from the running? It is important that regional transportation in Canada be integrated on a provincial or interprovincial basis. The Maritimes are serviced by Eastern Provincial Airlines and western Canada by Pacific Western Airlines in which the government of Alberta has interests. If this integration is necessary as a result of a stronger demand and efficiency requirements, the federal government must support this reorganization instead of doing the contrary. If we decide to leave regional transportation to private enterprise, we should not authorize Air Canada to establish itself where it should not. Air Canada has mainly a transcontinental and international transportation role.

As concerns the return of Nordair to the private sector, I wonder on what basis it will be done. Are we going to sell back Nordair for peanuts at a loss of several million dollars to the taxpayers? In any case, I sincerely hope that the province of Quebec which is particularly concerned will not be forgotten when the time comes and that throughout the province of Quebec and the rest of our country we will get an air integrated and well administered transportation system.

● (1642)

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** The hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth (Mr. Scott). I would like to point out that this is the hon. member's maiden speech.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I, through you, sir, express my sincere thanks to hon. members on all sides of this House for their warm good wishes in welcoming me back to Parliament Hill. It is a high honour to be back here in my new capacity and to be speaking on behalf of the people of Hamilton-Wentworth.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth):** Everywhere I go these days people keep asking, "How does it feel to be sitting down here after watching the scene for so long from the press gallery?" I guess it is like jumping from the frying pan into the frying pan, but I must say that the greatest major difference that has struck me has involved you, sir. There is, unquestionably, a difference in viewing the Chair from below and in front

[Mr. Allard.]

rather than from above and behind. One quickly acquires a sense of pre-eminence of your office from this vantage point, a backbench seat in the House of Commons. I assure you, sir, that I will try to demonstrate in this chamber the spirit of restrained behaviour accompanied with good humour which, as you know, has always been a hallmark of both members of parliament and members of the parliamentary press gallery.

Today's subject matter does not permit me to give the House a travelogue on the beauties of Hamilton-Wentworth riding, which I understand is a traditional feature of a member's maiden address. Besides, given the sprawling and diverse nature of my constituency, it would take the rest of the afternoon. I would, however, like to pay tribute to my young and dedicated predecessor, Sean O'Sullivan. He was a good MP for the people of Hamilton-Wentworth. He has now gone to a higher calling for which, as a Presbyterian, I am entirely ineligible.

What brings me close to home, both to my constituents and to this debate, sir, is Mount Hope airport, which lies within the newly defined boundary of Hamilton-Wentworth. Mount Hope, or Hamilton Civic Airport, has to be the most intensively studied airport in the country, and still there are questions and concerns on the part of many thousands of my constituents about this government's plans for it.

What will surely heighten concern about the future role of Mount Hope and raise many more questions is the federal government's non-solution concerning the takeover of Nordair. People in the Hamilton area have come to rely heavily on Nordair's first rate service in and out of Mount Hope airport. Since Air Canada indicated its interest in acquiring this highly successful and aggressive private company back in the early summer, there has been a very real concern that, with Nordair owned and controlled by the government airline but competing with Air Canada on southern Ontario routes, Nordair's service to Hamilton could be placed in jeopardy. Some reduction in the number of flights, and certainly in efficiency, is almost inevitable.

Yesterday's announcement by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) that the government is indeed taking over Nordair, that hopefully a private buyer can be found within the year, but that Nordair might emerge in a "new form" after the government arranges things with other regional airlines, will come as cold comfort to those who have been thrown into confusion by this government's recent moves in Canada's airline industry.

I should point out that I have always viewed the government's acquisition of Nordair as potentially harmful to the interests of the area I have the honour to represent in this chamber, Mr. Speaker. Any further intrusion by this or any other government in the free marketplace goes against the better judgment of the people of Hamilton-Wentworth.

What makes the Nordair takeover difficult to understand is that this government set down its own clear policy guidelines in the late 1960s to leave Canada's regional air carriers in the hands of the private sector. The government has now contradicted its earlier position by allowing Air Canada to buy