

Adjournment Debate

I am trying to ask the Minister of Transport, through you Mr. Speaker and through the House, for the benefit of all Canadians who use our airspaces, why these conditions are allowed to exist at Pearson International Airport.

In essence those are the questions I would like my friend across to answer this afternoon. I know that we are under some time restraints. If I could get some assurance that those questions would be answered this afternoon, I would be prepared to sit down right now and rely on his answers. Let me conclude and give him the opportunity to answer those questions. I hope he will take all of the time that is still available to me and the time that is available to him to respond.

I am not catching him off guard. My hon. friend was at a transport committee meeting with me just a short while ago and I told him I was going to use some comparisons as I was asking this question this afternoon. As he said to the previous speaker, he is from the Province of British Columbia. We know that the airport in Vancouver is perhaps one of the most efficient airports in the whole of Canada and it faces much the same problems as Pearson faces on a day-to-day basis. It has almost as many flights. In fact, propeller driven aircraft and helicopters at Vancouver airport far exceed those at Pearson.

For the benefit of all Canadians who use these airports, why do we not adopt at Pearson the good management philosophies that we are using at the Vancouver airport in his province? That is fairly simple and it would solve the problems that we are experiencing at Pearson.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity of asking those questions.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman opposite makes it all sound so very simple. I wish it were. However, the member opposite has a continuing interest in what is happening at Pearson airport because he has a vital interest in air safety and air traffic in Ontario.

The report that he talked about, the Canadian Aviation Safety Board's report on air traffic, which did make 48 recommendations for improving the Canadian system,

should not be interpreted as 48 deficiencies within the system at Lester B. Pearson International Airport.

As mentioned, the recommendations made by the CASB pertain to the entire system, some of which are related to technology now in the research and development stage, while others require international agreement and participation in the area providing control over the high seas.

The CASB recommendations can be implemented quickly. Indeed, the majority already have been. I can assure the hon. member that all recommendations have been given the utmost attention.

As part of that, as an ongoing procedure, the minister did put together a task force on aviation matters. In fact, it was such an important matter that my colleague, the Minister of Transport, established a task force in order to seek the expertise of the private sector, the industry and the government. The aim of that task force was to ensure that we have the right resources and that they are used in the right way in order to meet the changing needs of the future.

Speaking more specifically of Toronto, as we all know, Toronto is our busiest airport in Canada. The air traffic controllers have a difficult job which they do well. As the member knows very well, we are working to improve the situation at Toronto. We have hired former American controllers. We have increased the number of training seats available. There has been a cap on airline movements per hour at Toronto which will not be removed until the minister is satisfied that traffic can be handled safely and efficiently.

I can assure the hon. member that Toronto is still being actively studied to make sure that it is able to fill its role in the airline and transportation industry of this country.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. The House therefore stands adjourned until 2 p.m. tomorrow, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.28 p.m.