

Aeronautics Act

A number of other changes in the bill are highly technical and deal with questions which have arisen in practice, in the course of our administering safety and licensing aspects of legislation. One clause deals with the collection of fees and the imposition of interest charges on obligations carriers have not paid. This is particularly intended to deal with foreign carriers which have resisted the payment of appropriate fees for the use of our services and airports. The prospect of interest charges will give them an incentive to pay early and promptly, instead of delaying payment and so forcing our collection agencies to seek payment.

That, essentially, is the heart of the bill. I commend it to hon. members.

I now ask if hon. members would be willing to change the second reading motion, to provide for the bill to be referred to committee of the whole, so that it may proceed through all stages. There have been certain discussions and I understand there may be agreement to do this. If I am right, and I would appreciate if it could be determined, I will so move.

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, I did not understand there was agreement for this bill to be considered in committee of the whole and pass all stages. The hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) cannot be here today. This bill came on suddenly. We understood other legislation was to be considered this morning, and this bill later. It is true there have been discussions, but so far as we are concerned this bill should go to committee where certain groups and organizations may appear to make representation on parts of it.

This bill, Clause 2 in particular, has this in common with other legislation governing transportation: it extends the government's broad and sweeping powers to make charges for airport facilities and services, and presumably is consistent with the minister's user-pay concept. Although it is agreed generally that the cost of such services should be reflected in the charge for them, one must bear in mind the ability of the user to pay. Users should not be forced to pay for extravagance and waste, particularly for exotic, ultra-modern facilities, so-called, like Mirabel and other airports, built without consultation and without considering how users would employ such facilities. The government has acted unilaterally and has imposed undue burdens on airlines. These burdens have been passed on to the actual people who use the facilities, in the form of increased costs.

People in the airline industry will tell you that there has been much overbuilding of airport facilities in this country, particularly in some areas. The result has been extravagantly increased charges. The industry has had to pay a much higher scale of landing fees, as well as increased fees for other services. One year ago, in 1976, the minister wanted to increase by 600 per cent the landing fees for some who use certain airport facilities. Again the government acted unilaterally, without considering the industry. The minister has been laying his heavy hand on the industry and it is fair to say he has hurt particularly the general aviation industry. Under this legislation the powers are so broad that he can continue to

[Mr. Lang.]

make increases in the charges on a day-to-day or week-to-week basis without any consultation with the industry. That should be examined.

● (1120)

What we have to consider is that it is ultimately the consumer who has to pay for the services, the user. The one who rides on the airplane has to pay. It is interesting to note that in the March edition of *En Route* magazine put out by Air Canada, United States air lines pay an average of \$1.95 per passenger for landing fees and terminal assessments, while Air Canada pays to the federal government something like \$2.94 for each of the 4.2 million boarding passengers. That is about \$1 per passenger more for landing fees.

I wish to quote from the December, 1976, edition of "Government and Military Business". In one article the president of the Airline Transport Association, A. C. Morrison, is reported as pointing out, in addition to user charges and public service labour problems, that the industry has been shouldering added taxes. I quote from the article by Cliff Cowan as follows:

It is now estimated to cost more than \$4,000 to land a Boeing 747 at Mirabel.

Mirabel airport is a story in itself—enough to make an airline weep. Poor planning and esthetic design make industry wary of government help. Indeed ATAC in its annual report stated, "measures instigated by the government show little evidence of concern for the financial state of the industry... lack of concern and support is reflected in the reduced rate and limitation in the application of the capital cost allowance."

Mirabel, the industry feels, was a politically motivated decision that was constructed prematurely and against the advice of the air industry at too great a cost.

Some planes are now over-flying Mirabel and going on west to Toronto. Mirabel, has been estimated, will have a possible loss of \$46-million in this fiscal year.

Mirabel, too, is isolated. Badly-needed road links between it and Montreal have been planned and announced but remain not built.

The former Quebec government came up with plans for a new commuter train system linking Montreal and environs with Mirabel. Both the federal and provincial governments agreed to the plan and sponsored a respected Ottawa public servant, Douglas Fullerton, to draw the program up.

He estimated the cost would be in excess of \$500-million, but money, he learned, wasn't the major problem—local politics had to be considered.

The city of Montreal wanted to expand its Metro line and put a block on the Fullerton plan.

As a result, Mirabel remains an exotic and costly structure... but aloof.

The statement with regard to the possible loss of \$46 million in this fiscal year has certainly been quite accurate.

Under this legislation there will be more power in the hands of the minister to pay for exotic and costly mistakes perpetrated by this government, an extravagance that Canadians can ill afford. We do not object to the government imposing fair and reasonable fees upon the users of the services. However, this sort of waste is less than desirable.

Under proposed subsections (2) and (3) in section 5, the minister will ask the owners and operators to provide bonds to ensure for the payment of services, and provides for the imposition of liens. We can only assume that the ministry has had trouble collecting for services. We should have some clarification with regard to who are the offenders and to what