

*Aeronautics Act*

The minister says that in the United States additional transportation charges are now being considered in order to cover this kind of installation and maintenance in that country. That is vastly different from charging on the basis of availability every aircraft that uses Canadian air space. This is precisely, apart from general taxation that goes to the support of our highways, the principle upon which our highways system in Canada works. In other words, the provision of air safety in a country, like highway safety or any other public service, is an obligation of the general population. It is an obligation of the general ratepayer and not an obligation of the specific user, because the air lines themselves and other air users are not the only ones to benefit by the establishment and maintenance of these facilities.

The people who benefit from the establishment and maintenance of superior navigational aids are the general population in this country, everyone who uses the air lines. It would seem to me from what the minister has said that the United States is considering the imposition of an additional charge to passengers, in other words, the general public who are using air lines facilities in the United States. This is quite different from what this government is attempting to do by imposing a charge for the general availability of navigational aids in this country, and we are the first country to do such a thing.

**Mr. Turner:** The charge will eventually be reflected in the charge to passengers. The United States is doing it directly. This would be an indirect charge. Every nation in the world will have to insist on this type of charge for the availability of traffic control services.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Precisely; and it should be a matter of general taxation just as it is in the establishment and maintenance of highways in this country. Do the passengers using the public ground transportation facilities in this country have to pay a special kind of fee for using the buses and other means of transportation that travel on these systems? The more the minister considers this matter, the more he will agree with me, I am sure, that the principle of establishing safe airways and the maintenance of radio and navigational facilities in the functioning of those airways is an obligation that lies on the shoulders of every citizen of the country and not just on the users of those facilities in the form of air lines or aircraft owners and fliers. The general

[Mr. Nielsen.]

populace should be called upon to maintain this kind of service in the country. It is on this basis that I am pleading with the minister to reconsider the inclusion of the word "availability" in this paragraph. "Use", yes, but "availability" is much too vague and operates on a wrong principle entirely.

**Mr. Barnett:** Mr. Chairman, I have listened with a great deal of interest to the argument advanced by the hon. member for Yukon, and I remember the hon. member raising a similar issue earlier. I have also listened carefully to the remarks which the minister made in reply to the hon. member's points. It seems to me that on the face of it the hon. member for Yukon had the better of the argument, particularly when he drew a parallel with our highways. At an earlier stage in our history when the people who made use of the roads were a relatively small segment of the population the custom of applying tolls on road users was a fairly common one, but as we reached the point where virtually everyone used the roads the idea of charging tolls disappeared.

The minister advanced the argument that because of the growth of air travel these charges were becoming necessary. On the other hand, if I understood him correctly, the hon. member for Yukon was arguing that because of the general use being made of air services now by perhaps not everyone but at one time or another by virtually everyone in the country, the parallel situation in respect of the use of our highways was a reversal of the argument put forward by the minister.

● (5:30 p.m.)

I have not pursued this question to the extent the hon. member for Yukon has, but I would make that observation to the minister. I know that the argument he is advancing on this particular point is one which appears to be, shall I say, a creeping philosophy within the Department of Transport. It is an argument which undoubtedly will have to be the subject matter of debate on quite a number of occasions. The question of principle involved is of great concern on the west coast of British Columbia at the present time in regard to the use of facilities provided to those who use the sea lanes rather than the air lanes which are involved in this particular discussion.

I just wanted to let the minister know that I do have some interest in this question and that on balance, as the matter stands at the moment, the hon. member for Yukon seems