

deal with a firm having a contract with the government, raising the question of landing charges. Mr. Higgins will agree.

Mr. Higgins Yes, but it is important. I think your Committee were in agreement to leasing the airport to the airline companies?

Mr. Smallwood I prefer not to speak for the whole Committee on that. We stand by the report as a whole. We say it was suggested to Mr. Neill that such an attitude might have been chosen by the government in the first place. Knowing that these foreign airlines were more eager to use Gander than the government was or could be, all they had to do was to sit tight and wait for the airlines to come to them. They can't make their airlines pay, so far as the North Atlantic traffic is concerned, without Gander; it's an impossibility to make it pay, and the government might have stood pat and waited for the airlines to come to them, and then said "All right, we have no use for Gander, we have no aircraft and we don't intend to use it, but if you want to use it you can, on our conditions, and these are (1) that you pay all charges of operating the port, and (2) that you follow the conditions and standards of payment of wages, and the fact that Newfoundlanders must be employed. We lay down the standards and you follow them and pay all costs." It was suggested to Mr. Neill that should have been the attitude of the government. His answer was to shrug his shoulders and not vouchsafe a word of comment.

As for the Transportation Committee, in reply to Mr. Higgins, I still don't see for a moment that it would have been profitable, or that the Committee would have got anywhere if it had gone to Pan-American, Trans-World Airways, BOAC, TCA, etc., and even if it had been practical to meet them, I don't see that it would be quite proper. Maybe I am misunderstanding Mr. Higgins.

Mr. Higgins Yes, I did mean it that way.

Mr. Harrington I would like to ask a question, but first I would like to make a few comments on the report. To my mind the way Gander is being operated now is a public scandal. I have expressed myself on this whenever I could get an opportunity. The most reasonable thing to do would be to close down Gander. It is like a man with \$3,000 a year trying to operate a 50 car

garage for the benefit of his neighbours. It is a disgrace. As for the question, I see here that Mr. Smallwood, in the preamble, page 2, says, "We have to record that with one exception we have secured all the information we wanted."

That exception is Gander. Has that been refused?

Mr. Smallwood In reply to Mr. Harrington, the House will recall that the very first question tabled in this Convention was the one I tabled in connection with Gander. It was rather a long question, asking for details of expenditure, etc. I understand that a very honest attempt is being made to get out that information, but as yet we have not received it. It has not been refused.

Mr. Job It seems to me that, in expressing its views on the omissions, the Committee has overlooked the fact that not only should the airport have been run without loss to the colony, but the colony should have gotten something out of it. We have a strategic position, but it seems to have been given away, and a heavy loss incurred. There should have been something obtained for the colony in return for the concessions given. Early in February this year the surviving members of the old Legislative Council issued a protest through the newspapers here on the leases of airfields, and the lack of general information given to the public. In his reply Mr. Neill stated, as an excuse, that it was a rule between the nations concerned that only exchanges in air rights should be given. This report rightly points out that we were not in the same position of other countries because we did not want to run an air service, therefore we were entitled to something else in addition in exchange for use of our airfields. We were a member of this organisation and the excuse was that we were not able to bargain. The answer would seem to be that we should never have been a member of PICA¹ as it is called. I thought I would like to draw the attention of the members to the fact that this had been protested against. This is exactly what Mr. Neill wrote us: "Strategic positions on air routes are not a bargaining factor against any other concessions. 'Air rights for air rights' is the accepted international principle, and any suggestion that air rights should be a bargaining factor for other concessions would not be entertained." That is where we fell down at the start, in agreeing to abide by the decision of an organisation to

¹Provisional International Civil Aviation Organisation.