



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities

TRAN • NUMBER 116 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, October 25, 2018

—
Chair

The Honourable Judy A. Sgro

Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities

Thursday, October 25, 2018

• (0845)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.)): I'm calling to order the meeting of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. We are doing a study on assessing the impact of aircraft noise in the vicinity of major airports.

Before I introduce the witnesses, my colleague has a point that he would like to make.

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

This is not a transport committee issue, but it's a transport issue. I think that many of you were invited last night to the screening of *First Man*. There weren't many of us there, but a few of us went. The minister spoke and did a fine job of it, and so did our soon-to-be astronaut, David Saint-Jacques. We watched our current astronaut, Ryan Gosling, play Neil Armstrong in *First Man*. There we were, about 45 minutes into the movie, and they just blasted off to the moon. It was noisy and there were all kinds of crazy sounds, including this beep...beep...beep. All of a sudden, the screen went off, lights came on, and it was a fire alarm.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ron Liepert: There were 500 people, the entire movie theatre audience, all standing out in the cold. Some of us didn't bother hanging around to see whether he made it to the moon or not. I don't know if he made it to the moon, but I'll tell you what I did get, Madam Chair: a pair of free socks.

The Chair: Oh, wow! Look at those.

Mr. Ron Liepert: I'm going to declare them with the Ethics Commissioner.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: I wish we'd had a camera at that moment.

Mr. Ron Liepert: I think there are another pair of free socks over in the corner there.

A voice: He made it.

Mr. Ron Liepert: He made it? Oh, you came back. How long was it?

A voice: Yes, we did. It was 50 minutes.

The Chair: All right.

Thank you very much for bringing that to everybody's attention.

As witnesses this morning we have Peter Bayrachny, a representative from Neighbours Against the Airplane Noise, and as individuals, Richard Boehnke and Tom Driedger. Welcome to all of you.

Peter, would you start, please? You have five minutes.

Mr. Peter Bayrachny (Representative, Neighbours Against the Airplane Noise): Madam Chair and honourable members of the committee, thank you for having me appear before you today. I'm very pleased that this committee has chosen to study this important topic, which applies to Canadians across the country living in close proximity to airports.

Airport noise is the first thing people notice, complain about or discuss on the subject of nearby airports. I'm a resident of Markland Wood, the residential area closest to Pearson international airport, which is currently managed by the Greater Toronto Airports Authority, the GTAA.

I must also note that all surrounding neighbourhoods are affected by GTAA noise and should not be excluded from this study; however, my experience is as a resident of an affected neighbourhood. I can speak only from this experience and will concentrate my remarks on the effects of Pearson airport and the management of the GTAA.

The GTAA has announced their intention to double air traffic by 2040. This means that there will be a proportionate increase in aircraft noise overall. Pearson and many large airports are landlocked and cannot expand to gain more space. Fitting more takeoffs and landings into an existing infrastructure is the only way to expand, thus exacerbating the noise issue, which is already critical.

I believe that if parliamentary committees such as this one were to concentrate only on noise as the fundamental issue, you would be doing Canadians who live around these airports a great disservice. Noise is only one of the issues residents have to contend with. Associated with it are the health effects that such repetitive high levels of noise have on human beings living in these areas, as well as the impact of interrupted sleep due to aircraft noise.

To date, there have been no studies done by Health Canada or independent consultants on the current noise level effects on humans within the last 10 years or to consider the higher noise levels in the future, as proposed by the GTAA and other airports. Talking about noise does not matter if you do not consider current and future effects on the population living near these airports.

One important point to mention is night flights, a topic of great concern for all residents near an airport, especially Pearson. Night flight bans should be instituted at major airports in Canada. A number of major airports worldwide have night flight bans, including Heathrow Airport, the third-largest airport by worldwide rankings, and Frankfurt Airport, the ninth-largest one. Both have night flight bans, meaning no flights past 11 p.m. This should be the norm, not the exception.

Taking the theme of noise and effects on human health further, there is the environmental effect of increased air traffic. There also should be coordinating studies on the effects of exhaust fuel pollution and the environmental effects of the increased traffic. We currently have no pertinent data on environmental effects of added aircraft traffic. Environment Canada, in coordination with Health Canada, should set up monitoring stations around major airports such as Pearson to gather data on both noise and pollution. This is critical to making future decisions on important subjects such as increased aircraft traffic and its effects.

Let's now look into the future. Why does the GTAA want increased air traffic? The answer is income. As stated by Hillary Marshall of the GTAA, the organization is approximately \$5 billion in debt. We have a not-for-profit corporation that can only survive if it gets more revenue, which has translated into increased air traffic. With Toronto's population growth, current size and projections, we are already the fourth-largest metropolitan area in North America, recently overtaking Chicago.

Instead of trying to fit more air traffic into the same space at Pearson, why not add another airport? All of the top five cities in North America have at least two major airports, except for Toronto. The GTAA would not support this idea. They need to recoup their massive \$5-billion debt. We have alternatives such as Pickering, with land which the federal government already owns, or an existing airport in Hamilton, which could augment and add capacity to the Toronto area for airport traffic for years to come.

In conclusion, I would like to state the facts.

The federal government has given up control and management of many large airports in Canada to private corporations. This is not a partisan issue; this problem has been present through many governments, both Liberal and Conservative. I believe that airport noise, health effects and environmental issues should be monitored and managed by the government, not corporations such as the GTAA, which have only one goal: increasing income.

I suggest that in this committee report, recommendations be made to legislate more control over entities such as the GTAA so that government has the ability to control noise, health effects and pollution and how they affect the citizens you have been elected to serve.

●(0850)

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. Boehnke, would you like to go next?

Mr. Richard Boehnke (As an Individual): Yes.

Good morning.

My name is Richard Hermann Boehnke, and I'm from Etobicoke. I thank the standing committee for inviting me to share my view on aircraft noise.

My neighbours and I live south of the Lester B. Pearson International Airport, also known as Toronto Pearson or as “the little postage stamp” to the unkind. Well into my third decade of dealing with the airport administration—the Greater Toronto Airports Authority, the GTAA—with respect to its major waste product, aircraft noise, I have concluded that there are two mandatory actions that must be undertaken to improve the aircraft noise situation for Toronto residents.

In this 21st century, we must first have Health Canada establish and enforce human health-based standards for aircraft noise. Second, once these human health standards are established, they must be used to create a fixed and permanent allotment of night flights to replace the variable and ever-increasing formula used at present—a creation with a high-water mark calculation guaranteed never to reduce by design.

This is ironic, given that there is increased focus on sleep, and virtually everybody knows that sleep deprivation leads to increased blood pressure, anxiety, mood changes, difficulty concentrating, etc. Achieving this noise-health focus would clearly establish science-based responses to community noise complaints, and it would permit predictable aircraft movement patterns at night, again based on health science. Sound sleep is a basic human need that is equal to good food, potable water and safe housing.

Further, I'm certain that such health-based standards already exist in the European Union, among other sources, thereby sparing Health Canada much time and money in carrying out complex studies. Health Canada must monitor and must enforce these standards in order to build public confidence that the government is protecting them from a known noise hazard.

For the first time, this would also provide meaningful guidance to the airport's expansion plans, taking into account—and making just as important—human health considerations, as well as the economic sketches of the Toronto Pearson business planners as they aim at their 90-million-passenger target. After all, if we think it's noisy with 45 million passengers, imagine the noise by-product from 90 million people flying in and out annually.

Finally, if the aforementioned is not alarming enough to the standing committee, we could take a glance at the topic of safety. I observed that Transport Canada wishes to decrease its involvement in direct oversight of pilots with 45 million more passengers arriving in Toronto and that the SMS is not getting full support from its participants. We also hear about decades of delayed action on seatbelts for school buses and a similar lack of leadership on truck driver training across Canada. Then we hear about the airport's growth plans, and there are no impact studies. This really causes worry on the street.

Others have spoken to you about the funding challenges for Transport Canada, the constant cutbacks, the self-regulation plans being considered in place of direct oversight in the cockpit, and the general concern with regard to a perceived lack of public access in reviewing Transport Canada's enforcement responsibilities. Transport Canada has a lot of work that it is entrusted with. It likely needs the standing committee's help.

Thank you for the forum to share my words and my suggestions. Please help us before the cement sets on the expansion. Get us the health standards for noise.

[Translation]

Thank you.

● (0855)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Driedger is next.

Mr. Tom Driedger (As an Individual): Thank you.

My interest in airport noise comes from two sources. First of all, I live near the airport, and second, my career was in airports and the last 30 years were at Pearson, largely in the planning area. My topic today is the increasing night flights and the by-products of annoyance, sleep deprivation and decreased quality of life.

In 1996 there were about 9,600 flights at night between 12:30 and 6:30 in the morning. In 1997, the first full year after the airport was transferred to the GTAA from Transport Canada, the budget was 10,300. Currently, through a strange formula in which the budget for night flights increases in proportion to passenger growth, Transport Canada allows more than 19,000 flights during the night.

Compare this to other airports. Frankfurt imposes a complete ban. Heathrow allows 5,800, but that is tied to a noise quota budget that is decreasing. Montreal bans large aircraft over 45,000 kilograms, which reduces the overall noise dosage.

Although the aviation industry likes to point out that there is a budget that restricts the number of night flights, a restriction that increases annually is merely a temporary limitation. In the long term, it is a restriction in name only.

With the hope of attracting more business, the GTAA determined that the natural growth in the budget would not be sufficient to meet the demand and petitioned Transport Canada to permit three bump-ups of 10%. The approval was granted in 2013. Although the increase has not been used, it remains on the books.

I would like to illustrate the nature and the severity of night noise by a graph, which is on the wall. In the bottom right corner, you see an airplane flying over a square, which is the noise monitoring station at a place in Garnetwood Park. Garnetwood Park is located just north of Markham, where these two gentlemen come from, and south of another residential area in Mississauga, which the aircraft will pass over en route to the airport. The noise level is 80 decibels, which is the equivalent of an alarm clock.

Below that, you'll see another plane coming in, which will arrive at the noise monitoring station about two minutes later, and beyond that another and another and another.

In the middle, there is a panel that shows some information on the aircraft. It shows the elevation, which is 1,480 feet. This is somewhat misleading because that is ASL, above sea level. It is actually less than 1,000 feet above the ground. You'll note the origin of that flight, which is Puerto Vallarta, and the time, 3:18 a.m.

The current night flight budget is unreasonable. There must be an absolute upper limit on the number of flights and the maximum allowable noise. Night flights should be treated as a scarce and decreasing resource to be used judiciously, not one that is used with no upper limit. It is unacceptable for the industry to enjoy all the increasing economic benefits while the community bears all the increasing social and environmental costs.

Some night flights are necessary for the well-being of the region, but there must be a balance between the wants of the industry and the needs of the community. I doubt that the economy would be in peril if flights from sunspot destinations were not permitted to land in the middle of the night.

I have some suggestions for improvement. First, eliminate the provision for the annual increase in the night flight budget and the provision for the three bump-ups.

Second, over a five-year phase-in period, reduce the night flight budget back to the 9,600 that was in place when Transport Canada last operated the airport. Along with that, introduce measures to manage the total annual noise dosage and the maximum allowable levels for individual flights.

Third, introduce a substantial surcharge on night flights so that the true social and environmental costs of night flights are reflected in the total costs. This should apply to all airlines, including those that currently pay a fixed annual fee to operate at Pearson.

Undoubtedly the industry will vigorously protest any changes from the current scheme, as it will then have to make decisions on which flights to operate and which flights to drop.

● (0900)

However, changes are necessary and new regulations are needed so that the interests of the communities in the vicinity of the airport no longer remain secondary to the interests of the industry at Pearson and at all other airports.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you all very much.

We will go on to our questioners and Mr. Liepert.

Mr. Ron Liepert: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to share my time with my colleague, Ms. Block.

I'm going to ask one basic question and have everyone comment on it.

I represent a Calgary riding that isn't anywhere near the airport. However, because of the second runway they've put in, there's a change in flight paths, so now I have constituents who are having air traffic they've never had before. I can't comment on Toronto, so I'm not specific to Toronto, but I want each one of you to know that I am encountering as a member of Parliament some of the same concerns that I'm hearing, but probably not to the same degree.

One of the things I struggle with is the fact that we're a bit of a victim of our own success. One of the reasons they put a second major airstrip in Calgary was because of the demand. I said to some other witnesses the other day that we now have three flights a day from Calgary to Palm Springs, and they're putting two more on because they're full, so the demand is there. Our consumer shopping model has changed significantly, from going to the local mall to bringing it in overnight from Amazon.

One of the things I'd like a general comment on is this: If we look at some of the things that all of you are proposing, how would that impact the business community and how would that impact consumers' ability to get what they want expeditiously, which is also what they want?

Mr. Peter Bayrachny: If you don't mind, I can be the first to answer that.

It's very simple, sir. Hamilton airport can offload some of the traffic that the GTAA is currently experiencing. Hamilton has been, and still is, a cargo hub for certain carriers, such as UPS, etc. The GTAA has been outbidding Hamilton airport for their business, and they've been winning business as a result. I'll get back to this \$5-billion debt. They need to recoup that \$5 billion debt, and the only way they can do it is by accessing more business.

To answer your question, if we augmented Hamilton, for example, in the Toronto area—it's a cargo hub—we could increase that cargo hub to allow for more flights, because the cargo is typically night-flight activity, as well as the charters. Hamilton started off as a charter focal point, and it still is to a certain extent. The GTAA bids for that business, however, and they outbid other airports for it. That's the crux of the problem.

• (0905)

Mr. Ron Liepert: Could we have a couple more comments, please?

Mr. Richard Boehnke: I have no interest at all, nor do most of the people I work with, in curtailing Canadian business in any way, but if the product of the business has a known danger, we really do have to find out how dangerous it is and at what level it can be safely done. If they add, in our case, 45 million passengers, or in your case another runway, the secret is knowing the standard they have to adhere to.

Right now they leave that nice and loose, and it just keeps getting bigger and bigger and bigger. We know—we know—there are dangers inherent in that, so we want it actually defined.

Mr. Tom Driedger: That situation was similar to one that was faced at Pearson in the nineties, and they constructed a new runway. Knowing the new runway would impact people who had not previously been affected by noise, they put restrictions on it. Essentially they said it could only be used when winds prevented use

of the east-west runways. Transport is backpedalling on that now, but that's a different issue.

In the case of Calgary, it might be possible to put more emphasis on one runway than on the other. It might be possible to assign one for arrivals and one for departures. I don't know, but the long and the short of it is that a new runway is there to help the growing business, and this has impacted more people, and that's the dilemma. That's the dichotomy we're faced with: growing the economy or addressing human factors.

The Chair: Ms. Block is next.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): In Tuesday's testimony we heard solutions and suggestions that perhaps we could shift commercial operations like air cargo to airports further outside a city's perimeter. I'm wondering if you would speak to the economic feasibility of moving operations like air cargo to a place like Hamilton, for example.

Mr. Tom Driedger: I think that's very challenging, because the cargo companies have established major facilities at Pearson. FedEx has a huge facility. Vista Cargo is there. Also, a great deal of cargo comes in the belly of passenger aircraft.

The other point is that they moved from Hamilton to Pearson not only for economics but because it's closer to the market. The business wants you to be close to the market.

The Chair: Mr. Hardie is next.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

An issue raised in our earlier session was land use decisions by cities that allow for development in areas where there is the potential for noise and disruption. One thing we need to consider is that you have an airport there, and it's probably not going to go away, or replacing it with something would be quite expensive and wouldn't happen overnight. When we deal with overnight, are there some things that could be done for homes along the flight path?

Consider that open-office concepts in buildings often have noise suppression devices that reduce the amount of ambient noise so that people can conduct their business in a cubicle somewhere. Would those same devices not be available for homes to at least do some noise suppression over the nighttime hours to help people sleep better? Are there any thoughts about that, or has anybody looked at that possibility?

Mr. Peter Bayrachny: With all due respect, Mr. Hardie, I invite you to my home when we have night flights. You tell me whether or not any noise suppression can drown out an aircraft and shaking windows, etc. Markland and the other areas around the airport were there as communities before the airport expanded. As Mr. Boehnke has said, it's time to at least have a control on the effects of this.

• (0910)

Mr. Ken Hardie: In that respect, then, we also know that people have various tolerances to noise. Some people can sleep on a picket fence and some can't.

Would there not also be some utility in looking at real estate transactions and have some notice on a house listing that says that is on a flight path and that the people need to be aware of that? Far too often, people will move into an area without really understanding the dynamics of noise, be it from a rail switching yard to a truck route to a fly-over. Should that not also be part of the mix, as we look to try to mitigate the existing situation?

Mr. Peter Bayrachny: Mitigating that would mean decreased property values. At this point, we would be sitting here talking about noise and people's net worth and value as a result of making it public in a listing. Most real estate agents know where the flight paths are in Toronto, for example. It's the same thing with Montreal, and I'm sure Calgary—

Mr. Ken Hardie: Would they disclose that to a potential buyer?

Mr. Peter Bayrachny: Well, I think so. They wouldn't be much of a real estate agent if they didn't.

Mr. Ken Hardie: One never knows.

What role can Toronto and the surrounding communities play in trying to mitigate the existing situation?

Mr. Richard Boehnke: I would suggest that when you have a standard, you can then make that kind of determination. Until we actually have a measurable, scientifically based, human-health-focused standard of what is acceptable and what is not in Canada, you can't really make that decision. You're making it just on the basis that it's noisy. Well, "noisy" doesn't tell you a hell of a lot.

That's why I keep pushing this simple little thing that we all go skating around, because it would start to tighten things down. When people phone in a complaint, the airport could then say, "Well, it was within the standard." That's legitimate.

Mr. Ken Hardie: I believe, sir, that the next time a city close to the airport decides to take out some industrial land to build more townhouses, somebody should raise this point.

Mr. Richard Boehnke: I agree, but the point is that we will not have a change in people's circumstances, either the Torontonians who will live there or the people out west. We still need that factor to actually make a determination before you publish anything as though it's a warning, a dark sign.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Did you have anything to add, Mr. Driedger?

Mr. Tom Driedger: Many of the newer homes around the airport already have a noise warning on their titles, particularly the ones to the west. There are sections of Mississauga that were taken to the OMB, and the GTA lost and houses were built.

Going forward, it's developed. Some tinkering can be done maybe for infilling or redevelopment, but what you see is what you have. On Tuesday, Dr. Novak talked about the NEF contours and how they were out of date and they no longer reflected the standard. He said they were out of date in 1976.

That creates a problem for the government, because new standards may come out that may identify certain areas that are already developed that are inappropriate for housing. What does the government do? On the flip side of that—

Okay, thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. We're running out of time.

Mr. Aubin is next.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I thank our guests for joining us.

I will get right to the heart of the matter because time is running out.

Transport Canada is asking airports to have noise management committees made up of citizens. Perhaps you have even sat on such a committee in the past.

Here is my first question. Is that essentially a public performance or does it lead to concrete results for those who live close to an airport?

You can take turns answering.

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Driedger: I would like to comment on that.

I believe you used the word "facade", and I don't think that is inappropriate. These committees are not committees that will take action, and there are no concrete results.

By way of example, the GTAA has just come out with its noise management action plan, and with respect to helping our neighbours sleep at night, what are they going to do? They're going to publish a report outlining the economic necessity for night flights. They are also going to look at increasing landing fees specifically for night flight slots while they develop quieter fleet incentive programs. They're going to take money from the airlines for flying in at night, it seems to me, and give it back to them for retrofitting the aircraft, which seems bizarre. They also talk about immediately exploring changes to night flight restrictions.

It's a debating society. It's meant to placate the public, but I don't think the committee as it is now structured is an effective means of managing noise. That is the prerogative of the government, Transport Canada and the industry, and they do not have a mindset to manage noise.

● (0915)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

Mr. Bayrachny, do you want to add anything?

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Bayrachny: Yes, I have a comment on that as well. Your description of "facade"—I think I agree with the previous speaker—is accurate. That noise committee, when you look at the members of it—and I've met some of them—are from Whitby, Ajax and Scarborough, many areas far away from the GTAA. At the formation of the committee, taking Markland Wood as an example, there was not one member on that committee from Markland Wood or Tom's area.

Mr. Richard Boehnke: In the 30 years that I've worked with the noise management committee of the GTAA—and this is in their minutes—I asked in several sequential meetings whether they had ever reduced by one decibel any aircraft noise from the work they had done in the 30 years that I had brought this up. The answer was no.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

Concerning the standards you were talking about, I agree that an attempt to resolve an issue must be evidence-based. We have the example of an airplane that generates a noise of 80 decibels, while the WHO says that the average should be around 55 decibels. There is a massive discrepancy there.

We have data on pure noise. As for health effects, that is a more tenuous matter. In your opinion, would it not be appropriate for this committee to recommend to Health Canada to conduct a concrete study that would provide us with evidence on the impacts of noise pollution on health?

[English]

Mr. Peter Bayrachny: Yes, absolutely I agree 110%.

Mr. Tom Driedger: On Tuesday, Mr. Novak commented and said, "Look, it's sleep deprivation." He emphasized that this was a key cause of annoyance.

The Chair: You have one minute.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: This is not talked about as much now, but there is always the possibility of the government privatizing airports. We have gone from management by Transport Canada to management by port authorities.

What do you think about the idea of airports some day being privatized? Would that make the situation worse?

[English]

Mr. Tom Driedger: I'm not in favour of it. Assigning the airports to the airport authorities has distanced the people from the decision-making authority. Assigning it to the private sector would make it even worse, because then you have legal documents that you're dealing with. I'm quite sure that the community would not be given the emphasis they have now, which is much less than they used to have.

Mr. Richard Boehnke: It's all the more reason to have a standard in place, because if it privatize, you can be sure they will do everything in their power to keep the whole sky open for themselves.

Mr. Peter Bayrachny: I agree. It's all about income for them. It's not about people and health and whatever else. That doesn't play into it.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Iacono is next.

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Peter, in 2017 you were interviewed by Radio-Canada, and if I may cite you, you said, "It's certain terminology that they call 'noise

sharing' and they're starting to market that as a concept". Can you please elaborate on this terminology and what its features are, both positive and negative?

Mr. Peter Bayrachny: This idea came from both the GTAA and Helios, which was a consultant that GTAA hired to study noise.

Noise sharing is a method whereby you take problem areas of the GTAA, meaning the east-west runways, and you share that noise. All of a sudden the north-south runways, which are far closer to the airport, get their share of the noise. At the end of the day, Helios, in their final report that was published on September 11, stated that noise sharing is a bad idea. It's taking a problem and making it wider and sharing it. I urge every one of the members of the committee to read that report; it's very important.

Hopefully I answered your question.

• (0920)

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Do you know if it was used at the Pearson airport? Was this idea being tested?

Mr. Richard Boehnke: It certainly was. The problem is that the winds go from west to east 70% of the time, thereby shifting it around. Planes have to go into the wind. That isn't something you vote on. That's something that simply happens. That was the final decision.

[Translation]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Mr. Driedger, among other solutions, you suggest limiting the number of night flights to 9,600, as was the case in 1996. Do you think that limit may help radically reduce night noise?

[English]

Mr. Tom Driedger: If you cut the number of flights in half, you reduce the amount of noise, so yes, it would reduce it, but you have to keep in mind that in order to meet their goal of 90 million passengers, they're going to have to bring in larger planes, and larger planes make more noise. Even if you're bringing in fewer planes, I'm not convinced that the total noise dosage would go down, and that's important. If you have fewer flights, you get less noise. Whether 9,600 is the right number, I don't know, but I just think 19,000 is not.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Has this noise problem been going on for a long time?

Mr. Tom Driedger: It's been going on for a long time. It was triggered last year when they were doing construction on the two east-west runways and they had to use the north-south runway more, which is not one of their preferred runways. That added to it.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: I was told by my constituents that they've noticed the noise getting louder and louder within the last three to five years, and they've concluded that the planes are flying a lot lower. Is that the case at Pearson?

Mr. Tom Driedger: I don't think it's the case for arrivals, because they come in at a fixed slope. For departures, it's very dependent on the winds and the weather. If there are strong winds, they climb faster.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Would you like to add a comment to that?

Mr. Richard Boehnke: It's certainly hard when you see them take off over your house. You want to help lift it, but that's an impression.

Mr. Peter Bayrachny: I'll add to that very briefly. Again I refer to the Helios study, which each one of the members should read. It's a public study. They made a recommendation of different landing approaches for aircraft. Right now they do a very slight slope down, whereas Helix said there's another way. They'd be up higher and come in quicker and steeper to the runway, which would decrease the noise across that stretch.

[Translation]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Last Tuesday, the example of Pickering was brought up and was even commended by the Community Alliance for Air Safety. However, I must admit that my knowledge on that issue is limited.

Mr. Driedger, I think that, between 2004 and 2007, you studied the environmental repercussions of developing an airport in Pickering. Can you tell the committee about the analysis you carried out and its results?

[English]

Mr. Tom Driedger: The work I did was to prepare a document called the Pickering draft plan, which outlined what the project would be. I summarized the number of technical studies and made it into a readable public document.

I also prepared a draft document of the project description, which was the document that would have been used to launch an environmental assessment, but the board of the GTAA determined that we should not proceed with that project.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Would it be possible for you to provide us with these two reports, these two documents that you have completed?

Mr. Tom Driedger: The first one was never finalized and released. The second one used to be on Transport Canada's website. I personally do not have a copy of it, but I know you could get one from Transport Canada.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Do I still have more time?

The Chair: I'm sorry, you don't. It's gone.

Go ahead, Mr. Graham.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): I only have a couple of minutes, so I'll be as quick as I can, which is relatively fast.

Pearson is the fourth most expensive airport in the world to land at. The top three are all in Japan. Large planes pay as much as \$17 a tonne to land there, small planes \$145. It's a very expensive airport.

Traffic is going up very fast, as we've discussed. You talk about it increasing by exponential amounts over the next few years. My question is for all of you. When you fly, what decisions do you make to not add to the problem? What can consumers do to not pick those night flights and so forth? Do you have any thoughts on that?

• (0925)

Mr. Richard Boehnke: I don't fly very much. I have taken some of those tour flights to the Caribbean and have always felt the absolute peak of guilt, because there are no alternatives, so I either tell my wife we can't go, or I go and hold my nose.

It's true that they have this rule for some reason; they must make money by keeping the planes flying back and forth.

That's the only thing I can say. We don't take many, but when we do, we are conscious of it. I booked three of them because they landed before midnight.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: Otherwise one could fly out of Hamilton, for example, as you're suggesting.

Mr. Richard Boehnke: That would be an excellent alternative, but that doesn't exist at the present time.

Mr. Peter Bayrachny: I can add why it doesn't exist: It's because Pearson or the GTAA will fight any expansion into Hamilton because they don't own Hamilton. They get eliminated from those landing and takeoff rights. If the traffic goes to Hamilton, then that \$5-billion debt becomes \$6 billion.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: Very quickly, in the Canada Flight Supplement, which is the document given to all pilots on what airports have what rules, there are a number of very strict rules about noise controls at Pearson. It says that all non-noise-certified jet aircraft are restricted from landing between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m., with different noise levels having different time restrictions. Do you see any effect at all from the different restrictions? Are you aware of them at all?

Mr. Tom Driedger: I think that those non-noise-certified aircraft are few and far between. Many airports now are banning stage 2 aircraft—well, they are banning stage 3 aircraft, while the GTAA and Transport Canada are very proud that they no longer let stage 2 in there.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: I'm out of time. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Wrzesnewskyj is next.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): I have very little time, so I'll try to be pretty quick here.

We know that the GTA, the greater Toronto area, is an economic engine for the country. It's continuing to grow very rapidly, and the GTAA in tandem is looking to expand operations and increase its bottom line profitability at a cost to local neighbourhoods. This all gets back to accountability.

It is a regional monopoly, and it appears there is no accountability. It is not interested, as was mentioned, in sharing with Hamilton. It's looking at where it can increase its profitability. One of the things that was mentioned was having it as a nighttime hub for flights out of the Middle East, flights out of other destinations into North America. I assume Hamilton would be able to act as that sort of hub. The passengers aren't people coming to Toronto. They're just transferring on to other planes to go on to Houston, for instance. I assume Hamilton could also handle not just cargo but those kinds of nighttime hub flights, but that would break Pearson's regional monopoly.

What I'd like to get to is the accountability. It appears that the GTAA doesn't have accountability, the federal government is not providing the oversight, and Nav Canada switches around flights in ways that impact neighbourhoods, even though it also is an arm's-length non-profit corporation. What needs to be done to bring accountability to this regional monopoly that is increasing its profits at the cost to the quality of life of local neighbourhoods?

Mr. Tom Driedger: The GTAA just plays in the sandbox that's provided by Transport Canada. I think they're doing what anyone would do: they will operate within the limits that are set for them. If limits are to be placed, I think they have to come from Transport Canada, both on the airport side and on the Nav Canada side, and that applies to airports across the country.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: So the question then becomes—

The Chair: I'm sorry; time is up. Mr. Jeneroux is next.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today and for travelling to come here.

You mentioned Hamilton a number of times. The GTA's Pearson airport has now—we'll use the word “absorbed”—Hamilton.

Are you aware of any other opportunities that Pearson is trying to gain within the GTA at this point? Is Pearson shifting to more cargo-based business than some airports? We had the opportunity to see Hamilton airport recently, and it's a great airport with the opportunity for more cargo. I'm curious as to your thoughts on the vision Pearson has, and if you're seeing it.

• (0930)

Mr. Peter Bayrachny: From what I've seen at the community meetings and the facts that have come up is that further to Borys's comment, you have lack of oversight. Profitability is dictating this whole thing. They are trying to pay down a \$5-billion debt by taking business from other areas.

I think Hamilton still is a cargo hub. It was a cargo hub, but it was also a charter hub, which Pearson has taken away over the last number of years. To Richard's comment about whether I would drive to Hamilton to pick up a 5 a.m. or 6 a.m. flight to the Caribbean—absolutely. That's a very logical thing.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Do you have any comments, Mr. Driedger?

Mr. Tom Driedger: I somewhat disagree with that. The market is Toronto. The market is Pearson. That's where they want to be. I don't agree that Pearson is attracting them as much as that they want to be here. WestJet was in Hamilton, and they wanted to grow their business; you grow it where the people are.

I think Hamilton has a role, but I think it has to develop its own role around its own market.

Part of the growth at Pearson and its international hub is the pricing structure that the GTAA has with two major airlines. They pay a fixed sum and they can operate as many flights as they want, including night flights. The more flights they operate, the lower their unit costs.

With respect to night flights, I think there should be a substantial surcharge so that the true environmental and social cost are reflected in the total cost.

Mr. Richard Boehnke: In my view, it would be simply be that we not play airport. I've always found you shouldn't stick your nose where it doesn't belong, and you always dance with the one you came with.

We're dealing here with a problem they have, and that is noise. I've always managed to steer clear of all the other aspects of their business relationships, because that's neither my expertise nor my business.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: That's good life advice, I think, Madam Chair.

The Chair: For a lot of things.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Yes.

I'll end with a comment.

I'm from Edmonton, and the airport there is expanding its commercial business. There's certainly a growing cargo piece to it, but it's about half an hour or 45 minutes away from the first home within the city of Edmonton. I constantly hear that the airport is too far from the city limits. The city is expanding and it's growing closer to it, but it's interesting to hear your perspective from the GTA, because we face quite a different perspective in Edmonton.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll move on to Mr. Sikand for about three minutes or so.

Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Okay. I'll move pretty quickly.

I represent a riding called Mississauga—Streetsville, which on your map is Highway 40 at Meadowvale and 45 and 48 near Streetsville, so this is definitely a concern to my residents.

We have Hamilton, which is underutilized; Pickering is a bit farther outside the GTA, but we have a lot of land just north of the 407 and the escarpment, and Metrolinx has preliminary plans to get more rail out that way.

Is there a conversation that should be had about whether an airport can go up past the escarpment, up north there?

I'll start with you, Peter.

Mr. Peter Bayrachny: Certainly we need to have a conversation, and when we talk about airports being too far or too close and the centres of communities, if you look at the major centres such as Chicago, you see O'Hare and Midway. They're an hour apart, two hours in traffic.

Toronto is the same way. If you try to get from Whitby to Pearson, it's a two-hour ride at any particular time, so—

• (0935)

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Sorry; I don't mean to cut you off. It's just because I have limited time.

Is that yes or no?

Mr. Peter Bayrachny: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Gagan Sikand: If that were the case, Tom, could we talk about fragmenting the type of flights then, if you had that proximity to Pearson?

Mr. Tom Driedger: It's very difficult. Airlines have alliance partners. They use flights domestically that will fly out internationally. Split operations are not very efficient or useful.

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, you have a minute and 30 seconds.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: I'd like to follow up on the whole question of accountability.

The GTAA has a lack of trust when it comes to relations with the community. As was mentioned, this noise committee appears to be a facade. They are a regional monopoly. They appear to not be accountable to anyone. They are an arm's-length non-profit, so we don't even see a lot of the inner workings and decision-making.

You've lived in the neighbourhood for a very long time. At the end of the day, it's a federal responsibility. Do you feel that Transport Canada has lived up to its responsibilities to the electorate in your neighbourhoods?

Mr. Richard Boehnke: There's little evidence of it.

Mr. Peter Bayrachny: I would say no. I agree.

Mr. Tom Driedger: They no longer have the ability to understand how airports operate. Years ago, there was this flow of people from regions to airports to headquarters, and Transport Canada was knowledgeable. That knowledge is gone now. There is no airports branch.

I don't think they really have a deep understanding of the way they operate and how they affect people, and it appears to me that they do not have the mindset to go after the airlines and the airports to make the tough decisions. They should be the ones who are leading the charge, but I get the feeling that Transport Canada is in the corner with the airline industry, and the community is on the outside looking in.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Thank you so much.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We have a very tight meeting today, because we have to be in the House by 10 o'clock.

The witnesses can just stay for a moment.

Rather than go in camera, I'm going to ask the committee about a suggestion we have of an additional meeting on the study we're doing and that we invite Transport Canada, Air Canada and WestJet. We've had some interest from them, and they are part of this issue as well.

Do we have everybody's approval to schedule one more meeting with some of the airlines and Transport Canada?

Mr. Ron Liepert: Could I make a suggestion that if we have Air Canada and WestJet here, we get somebody who is a decision-maker from those two companies, and not their GR guys?

The Chair: I certainly will put in the request.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Madam Chair—

Mr. Ron Liepert: I would suggest, actually, that we do more than put in a request. We as a committee have the right to call witnesses, and when we ask these companies, so often we get their GR guys who say, "Well, it's not my decision."

I'd like decision-makers, whether it's the CEO or the COO. If we're going to take our time, let's get decision-makers at the table, and not their GR guys.

The Chair: That's a terrific suggestion.

Go ahead, Borys.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: I support this. Of course, we should be judicious in using this, but we do have subpoena powers as committees.

I'd also like to suggest Nav Canada. They are a very important part of this particular puzzle.

Mr. Ron Liepert: I think they're already on it.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Oh, they're on the roster.

The Chair: Yes, they're on next Tuesday.

Mr. Ron Liepert: They're crucial to this.

The Chair: On one other committee business item—

Sorry; go ahead, Monsieur Aubin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Are we talking about an additional hour or an additional meeting, or two hours of committee?

[*English*]

The Chair: It would need to be a two-hour block.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Okay.

[*English*]

The Chair: You have a budget in front of you that needs to be adopted for this study. Everybody is in agreement with that.

As just a reminder, the preliminary recommendations on our interim trade corridors report should be in by November 1, if possible.

We are having the first nations come later on in November, but our analysts say they can move forward on that report and add to it following that other meeting.

Wellington is blocked off, but our buses are there.

The committee is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <http://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.noscommunes.ca>