

OBSERVATION

-

FLYING CAN BE SUCH A BORE !

Cathay Pacific Flight CX 828 on December 21, 1999 may be exemplified by the wilting carnation in the toilet of the Business Section of the airplane.

Travelling between Hongkong and Toronto is difficult enough, in any event, due to the length of the flight, but what is making it even more difficult of late is the obvious downgrading of the quality and variety of food -- at least, on Cathay Pacific flights.

This observer noted that, of the 30-odd people in the Business Section of CX828, only 3 brave passengers finished their main courses of the dinner on offer.

Few people ate the vegetable salad, planted on the trays of passengers, but that was to be expected since, when the edges of lettuce leaves have turned brown from age, and Julienne carrots are dried out to such an extent that they crackle and snap at the slightest touch, such raw vegetables are hardly to be considered edible.

At breakfast, some 12 hours after the dinner had been served, few of the travelling souls, by then approaching exhaustion, ate much of that which was offered -- stale, cold rolls, dried-up omelettes, tasteless congee, etc.

And, when food is served by surly and unsmiling waitresses (known as stewardesses on airlines), then it becomes an intolerable burden to bear for restless and exhausted passengers.

One wonders whether or not Cathay Pacific is trying to aim for the level of some rural airlines in the People's Republic of China and the Republic of India.

One is reminded of stories of some of these airlines where it is said to be permissible to cook one's own curry in the aisles of the aircraft on kerosene burners, similar to what the American and English Army soldiers were issued during World War II.

The level of entertainment on board Cathay Pacific is another interesting aspect of what must be a cost-cutting exercise for this once, premier Asian airline since most of what is viewable, on the little television screens (many of which are broken) are features which were produced decades ago.

Also, unlike many rival airlines where movies and discovery channels, etc, are continuous, on Cathay Pacific, when a feature is concluded, one has to wait as long as 30 minutes for the next programme to begin -- if the waitresses remember to restart the machines, that is, or whatever they do.

-- E N D --