

Privilege—Mr. G. Scott

that agreement in principle, it was fully intended that that airport expansion should go ahead.

I would think that it was anticipated we would have to find within the appropriate envelope system the \$45 million that would be needed to ensure that that airport could be built within the time-frame that, incidentally, was referred to in the press release to which I have referred. The press release stated:—construction is planned to begin in 1980-81 and should be completed by 1984-85.

● (1220)

In short, I think it is unfortunate that the Minister of Transport should have shed some doubt about a firm commitment made by the previous government to go ahead with this airport project at an approximate cost of \$45 million. Treasury Board agreed to the only thing it had been asked to agree to up to that point, that is to say, to approve the \$220,000 funding for the consulting services which was needed to expedite the project. But it was clearly understood that the Department of Transport would then follow up with more definitive plans which could, presumably, be cleared subsequently by the Treasury Board unless, and I emphasize this, Madam Speaker, the government of the day decided to reverse the commitment it had entered into in principle during our administration to go ahead and build the airport.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, my contribution will be very short indeed. We will let the people of Hamilton decide who is right and who is wrong in these matters. I repeat what I said yesterday. To the best of my knowledge, first, this was an election promise, one of many others. Unfortunately, if I were to honour half of the promises which were made during those months of January and February, I would be out of business for the next three years. So, first of all, it was an election promise. Second, it received the beatification of cabinet "in principle". Third, it was not sent to the Treasury Board to go through the rigours of analysis except for the part which had to do with the consultant services; we agree on that. Finally, if the amount of money was in the envelope I must have looked at a different envelope because I did not see it there.

So we will leave it at that and the people of Hamilton will judge the amount of importance, the credibility, to be given to that \$50 million promise. However, I want to promise on my own, and I said this repeatedly yesterday, that I have the best of intentions, the best of motives, the best of dispositions with respect to the Hamilton airport, the Mount Hope airport. I mean well. I just want to be responsible and do what needs to be done. If it is \$50 million, so it will be. I just do not want to be tied because I think it would be irresponsible on my part to be tied to a figure, either this one or the one previously mentioned.

Mr. Stevens: On a point of clarification—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I think I will rule on this question. I think I have heard a sufficient number of interventions.

[*Translation*]

I believe that again we are dealing with a debate. It is clearly a debate and therefore not a question of privilege. In addition, I should like to point out to hon. members who have risen so far in this debate that I listened to them to the end but that it became very obvious early in their intervention that they were dealing with remarks made last night. Consequently, hon. members had every opportunity of giving me notice of their question of privilege, as our rules require. I had to listen to them today because, of course, the proceedings in progress can give rise to a question of privilege. But that is not the case in this instance, and as a consequence I should have been grateful for getting notice of that question of privilege.

[*English*]

Mr. Stevens: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I naturally acknowledge your decision on the question of privilege but I think it raises a matter of order that the Minister of Transport should have left the impression that all we have been talking about is some type of vague election promise. I am not reflecting on your decision but I want to make it clear as a point of order that the reference from which I was reading is to be found in a document in the minister's own department.

There should be absolutely no confusion in his mind as to what took place under the previous government. Therefore, I ask that he table that document, which is dated February 7, 1980, is addressed to the Treasury Board and sets out this matter in its entirety. I believe the House will see that it was not an election promise but a firm cabinet decision being acted upon. It is most misleading for the Minister of Transport to indicate otherwise.

Madam Speaker: It is not up to the hon. member to correct *Hansard*. If he feels the minister has not given him an adequate answer, or if the minister feels he should correct *Hansard* because he has not been properly reported, he could do so himself.

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[*Translation*]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed Bill C-29, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service for the financial year ending the March 31, 1981.