

ing the city of Hamilton's legitimate efforts to obtain the best possible airport in the most convenient location. At the same time, this affection for my hometown and determination to assist its progress does not blind me to the needs and rights of the residents of municipalities surrounding Hamilton and the expanded airport. By its own admission, the Department of Transport wants to upgrade the facilities to create a regional airport. We know the department has had meetings, some of them closed even to Members of Parliament, with officials of the city of Hamilton. But what about the people of Ancaster and Binbrook, Stoney Creek and Saltfleet, Glanford and Mount Hope? They, too, have a right to be heard. They will not benefit as directly or as substantially from the improved airport, yet they are expected to bear a much greater share of the burden in terms of expropriated land, displaced homes, noise and air pollution.

I invite the Minister of Transport, his parliamentary secretary and officials of their department to visit these communities which contain some of the most beautiful and peaceful residential areas that this land can offer. I further invite them to consider the impact that the present expansion plans will have on these communities and the effects upon their residents. Then I make a simple request not to abandon plans for better airport facilities, not even to dismiss out of hand the existing plans, but simply to reconsider these plans and to give full and fair consideration to possible alternate sites for the airport facility. I ask the department to check out the possible alternatives for a location where land is less expansive and less densely populated, where there would be room for long-range planning and where flight paths could be devised to keep noise and air pollution away from the built-up areas. The means, I suggest, for such consideration is that of public hearings.

As a new member, Mr. Speaker, I have already experienced enough of the frustrations of daily parliamentary life to be wary of committees, commissions, inquiries or even hearings.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. O'Sullivan: I have also learned to be wary of parliamentary secretaries.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Especially some of them.

Mr. O'Sullivan: I only trust the ministers. According to the Secretary of State (Mr. Faulkner), we will know in a few weeks how many OFY grants he has approved for the constituency of Hamilton-Wentworth. I also recognize that the holding of public hearings may delay the construction of the airport facilities wherever they may be located. However, these airport plans for the future, Mr. Speaker, and I am convinced that a brief delay taken now in the cause of cautious study would pay dividends in the years, and perhaps decades ahead, when all residents of the Hamilton-Wentworth area will feel the effects of the decisions made today. Another reason I seek such hearings to be held in public and, I hope, convened by a respected and neutral third party, is that they would bring government

Airports

and the people together or, should I say, bring government back to the people.

I shall not be too surprised, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. parliamentary secretary, in giving the response to this motion on behalf of the Department of Transport, protests that the department has indeed considered other sites and has most certainly engaged in ample public dialogue. That is what we have been told before. If that is the case, why does the department refuse to make public all its documents relating to studies of alternate sites? If the department continues to claim that enough public dialogue has been held, I can only conclude that it simply did not like what little it has listened to and does not want its plans, drawn up by civil servants in Ottawa and Toronto who will never have to live beside their own creation, disturbed by the feelings of local residents.

Ideally, this or any other airport expansion should be greeted by public understanding, good will and co-operation. But if it expects, or aims for, those feelings from citizens, government must first be willing to be truthful, straightforward and open about its intentions. Whatever the causes, the department has not fulfilled all these prerequisites and I am afraid this failure has bred mistrust, suspicion and hostility. In its own interests, but also for the sake of the residents involved and in the interests of democratic government, I urge the department to exhibit its good faith by a willingness to level with the people, to listen to them and to learn from them.

For all the foregoing reasons, Mr. Speaker, and for those that time does not permit me to express, I propose this motion and I appreciate the consideration extended by the House.

• (1610)

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, important as the airport is, there is another matter which is of far greater importance, as I am sure the hon. member whose motion is now before the House will agree. This matter of far greater importance involves the manner in which a committee of this House is functioning. It is appropriate that the hon. member who just moved a motion in this chamber is wary of committees, because that is closely related to what I am about to say.

There is a committee of this House which is attempting to bypass the concern expressed earlier in this chamber when it referred a certain subject matter, namely, the annual report of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, to the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The intention was that the committee should engage in a study in depth of the whole question of aboriginal rights. The committee has bypassed this subject matter and is, in fact, dealing with all manner of other subjects, as is its right since the estimates of the department are before it.

Much more germane is the motion in the name of my hon. friend from the Northwest Territories (Mr. Firth) seeking to set up a committee to deal solely with the question of aboriginal rights. This is of far greater importance than many other things we deal with in this House. Accordingly, I move, seconded by my hon. friend from Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent):