

invent all kinds of questions having to do with Mirabel, but we have never had such intentions, so consequently I cannot comment further.

Mr. McCain: Madam Speaker, I hope that means the minister has abandoned the idea of transferring any flights within Canada to Mirabel.

COST OF GROUND TRAVEL BETWEEN DORVAL AND MIRABEL

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Madam Speaker, if the minister is still considering this, which apparently he is, has he given any consideration to the cost which will be imposed upon the traveller who arrives in Montreal on a flight diverted to Mirabel and who may connect with Atlantic Canada? Conversely, has he given any consideration to the additional cost in terms both of time and money which will be involved for flights connecting from Dorval to Mirabel to other points of destination?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, this question is very elementary. We investigated all possibilities, as I said, and at all times we had the interests of the carriers, the interests of travellers, and the interests of governments in mind. We were looking at all costs that any of the scenarios previously described would incur. The question is really a basic one. We looked at all possibilities. We looked at all factors.

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THE ECONOMY

DEFINITION OF DEPRESSION

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Bearing in mind that the inflation rate is unacceptably high, that bankruptcies in the country are running rampant, that our dollar is at a record low level, and that the number of unemployed is the highest ever, would the Minister of Finance, who has used—today and frequently—the words “recession”, tell us what is his definition of a depression? Most Canadians losing their businesses and homes consider this to be a depression.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I do not have a definition of a depression because I do not think we are in a depression.

● (1200)

Mr. Malone: Madam Speaker, perhaps I can help the minister by telling him that psychological depression is listening to an answer given by the Minister of Finance. An economic depression is receiving the results of actions taken by the Minister of Finance.

HIGH INTEREST RATES

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): May I ask the Minister of Finance more specifically what is the reason that we have a

program of high interest rates if the result of such a program is for farmers, fishermen, businessmen and investors in the country to lose their businesses? What advantage is that to the country?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I have explained, and the Prime Minister has explained, that we do not have a program of high interest rates. High interest rates exist, but they are certainly not sought or promoted by the Government of Canada.

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PETITION

MR. SCOTT (HAMILTON-WENTWORTH)—PROHIBITION OF GROUP SEX

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has laid upon the Table the two hundred and seventy-first report of the Clerk of Petitions stating that he has examined the petition presented by the hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth (Mr. Scott) on Thursday, June 17, 1982, and finds that the petition meets the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

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POINT OF ORDER

MR. ANDRE—PROVISIONS IN MAIN ESTIMATES, 1982-83

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Madam Speaker, the point of order I raise at this time is basically the same as the point of order I raised last year on June 1, March 31 and March 24, and which has been raised several times in the past by myself and others, going back to 1969 when the rules were changed in regard to the handling of the estimates and appropriation bills.

About this time last year, Madam Speaker, you summarized and clarified the position of the Chair in regard to this matter. If I might quote briefly from your remarks which appear in *Hansard* for June 12, 1981, on page 10456 you stated:

In 1971 the Chair ruled that items in the Estimates that attempt to amend existing statutes are of order. This was confirmed by most subsequent rulings.

In 1974 and 1976 the Chair went further and dealt with the question of matters of substance being put in the Estimates. The Speaker, in effect, ruled that the Appropriation Act is not the place to seek authority to do something such as to establish a program. Rather, the Appropriation Act should only seek authority to spend the money for a program that has been previously authorized by a statute.

In 1977 the Chair continued to lay down these principles that should be followed in the use of the Estimates and added that it makes no difference whether the item attempted to spend a large sum or simply one dollar. The distinction is unimportant. The test is whether or not the government is putting forward a spending estimate under authority it already possesses, or whether it is really seeking new legislative authority to do something.