

Oral Questions

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I have been doing some mental arithmetic. Let us take today's date, which is February 16, and add two or three months, and the answer is obvious: April or May. So I can confirm that what I said earlier was indeed what was implied in the question put by the member for Joliette.

INQUIRY WHETHER FUTURE OF MIRABEL WILL BE KNOWN BY
JUNE 1

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Madam Speaker, considering the fact that in the case of Nordair, for instance, there were a number of extensions, and I see that three months from today would be May 16, I want to ask the Minister of Transport whether he can give the House the assurance, before the group of concerned citizens here today and the group that is expected to come next week, that it will be told what is to be done with Mirabel and Dorval on June 1?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend, who was himself a minister for a few weeks, knows perfectly well that I cannot give him the physical assurance that this will be the case, because it obviously depends on a number of my colleagues who may decide otherwise. As far as I am concerned, and I think I can commit the cabinet as well—assuming that the important thing is to have a decision, and the mayors are going to let me know in a few minutes—I believe I can give the hon. member the assurance that I shall do my utmost to provide an answer within the next two or three months, as I just said.

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● (1450)

[English]

FINANCE

BANK FUNDING FOR SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BOND
PROGRAM

Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher): Madam Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Finance but, in his absence, I will direct it either to the Prime Minister or to the Minister of State for Finance. While the November 12 budget seriously eroded the effectiveness of the Small Business Development Bond, it at least gave some hope to owners of small businesses and farmers that there might be some relief from high interest rates. Could the minister explain why it is that while that budget provision is now in effect, the banks of Canada have cut off all funds for Small Business Development Bonds?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is making very serious allegations when he says that Canadian banks have definitely cut off all funds for Small Business Development Bonds. I

think that the situation should be monitored very closely and the Minister of Finance will get in touch with representatives of the banking institutions to check these allegations, and should they turn out to be true, find out the reason for such behaviour.

[English]

REQUEST FOR REPORT

Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher): Madam Speaker, I wish those allegations would be checked. If the Minister of State for Finance checks with the banks he will find that, for instance, as of February 10 the Royal Bank withdrew those funds. Canadians have gone to some expense. They have retained accountants to find out whether they are eligible for Small Business Development Bonds. Time has been spent but, more important, this is another aspect of the budget which has just gone by the boards. It is another discredit to the Minister of Finance.

When will we have an answer? Is the Small Business Development Bond in effect? Is there funding and, if there is not, will the government give Canadians an answer tomorrow? Is there money for Small Business Development Bonds?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, the hon. member who claims to be well informed, seems to forget that by its very nature this bond requires the involvement of our financial institutions through our taxation system. As I said, we will check whether funds are still available and encourage banks to help us maintain in operation the Small Business Development Bond program.

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AIRPORTS

MONTREAL—ESTABLISHMENT OF ENLARGED ADMINISTRATIVE
AIRPORT ZONE

Mr. Marcel Roy (Laval): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. It concerns the plans for Montreal International Airport at Mirabel. There will be an impact on the economy, not only of the North Shore but of the entire province. We must know when the decision will be made, so that the mayors will be able to plan accordingly. My question is as follows: Would the government consider creating an administrative area that would cover the airports of Dorval, St-Hubert and Mirabel in order to avoid this political conflict between two areas, since the economic impact will affect the entire province?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, no proposal of this kind is under consideration, but I can assure the hon. member that the problem only concerns Mirabel and Dorval, and that St-Hubert is not in the picture. I am told that things are running smoothly in St-Hubert and