

Oral Questions

Some time ago the government announced the details of its implementation of election promises with regard to grants for modern rapid transit between communities. My question is this: Has the government made a decision with regard to grants relating to rapid transit within municipalities? If not, when is the decision likely to be made? I ask this because the minister's response to me some time ago was delightfully obfuscating, and he sort of put off the question. Will he now tell us if this is to be done now or in the foreseeable future?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, with reference to the specific question about commuter systems between two communities, certainly the object of the legislation is to tie in communities, and the fact that they may be in the same municipality is no objection. Indeed, as recently as a week ago I spoke with the mayor of Edmonton on this matter. Firm regulations will be drafted shortly. But the object of the exercise is not to pay for systems that were in place or committed previously. The object is to encourage new systems, so that we can deal with the decentralization and growth of great urban centres such as the great city of Edmonton.

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AIR TRANSPORT**INCREASE IN AIRPORT USER CHARGES—REQUEST FOR
TABLING OF COST-BENEFIT STUDY**

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Transport is supplementary to the question asked on Monday by the hon. member for Capilano. In view of the criticism of the Air Transport Association regarding the \$22 million increase in airport user charges, has the minister conducted or will he conduct and table a cost-benefit study, to ensure that the increase is equitable and in line with the anti-inflation program? My question arises from a report which indicates that the increase will amount to approximately 30 per cent across the board for general terminal charges and landing fees, and there is to be more than a 600 per cent increase for landing fees connected with pilot training. Can the minister answer this question?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, first, it should be recognized that the guidelines have not restricted the opportunity of any government in the country to re-examine programs and priorities and obtain a larger amount of revenue from the user rather than from the taxpayer, as, otherwise, collecting more money could have an interesting and important impact on the economy and the services being offered. We are proposing user charges and the 30 per cent figure is accurate. In some cases a higher increase is proposed because the charge was very low, compared with the real cost of the service being provided.

It is part of our over-all proposition that, in many cases, those who use the services should pay a higher proportion for the benefit they receive rather than that the general taxpayer should be expected to help.

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton-West).]

**INCREASE IN AIRPORT USER CHARGES—POSSIBILITY OF
CONFLICT WITH ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM**

Mr. Ron Huntington (Capilano): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the answer the minister gave the hon. member for Lisgar. Would he help those working on the transport committee and answer the following question: Does the minister place a higher priority on implementing the new user pay program than he places on the anti-inflation objectives of his colleague, the Minister of Finance?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the answer is, no. It should be obvious from the first part of my earlier answer that there is an impact on inflation and on Canadians if tax dollars have to be raised from taxpayers generally, thus reducing their take-home pay and money which they can spend, or if the money is raised by borrowing, therefore increasing tax deficit in the economy. The government must balance these items and their impact on the economy. I should add, in answer to part of the question asked a moment ago, that we are doing a careful analysis of real costs and the appropriate portion of those costs to be borne by the people who fly and the various services provided to them. This study will take somewhat longer. We are satisfied that the increased charges we are imposing are well below the total value of the service.

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ENERGY**ALLEGATION OF FAULTY CONSTRUCTION ON TRANSCANADA
PIPELINE—REASON ENERGY BOARD HAS NOT CONSIDERED
EVIDENCE**

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources relates to the allegations that the welding done on sections of the TransCanada pipeline running through Manitoba and Ontario is of such poor quality as to represent a hazard. These are allegations made by a former safety inspection contractor. As, on January 28, the secretary of the National Energy Board wrote to the president of CTV to request that CTV present the NEB with all evidence it has, including radiographs of pipeline welds, and as the president of CTV offered to comply with the request and asked for an immediate meeting with the NEB, to turn over the evidence, can the minister tell the House why no meeting has yet been held and, in particular, why the chairman of the National Energy Board would have issued a news release on Tuesday stating that the allegations had been carefully investigated and rejecting outright any claim that the Board's investigation has been superficial?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I indicated in my answer to the House that the Chairman of the National Energy Board had said that the Board had investigated claims in the past to the effect that the line was unsafe but had found those claims to be totally unfounded, further, that they were prepared to consider any new evidence from CTV, or, indeed, any other person. I mentioned one par-