

offer to buy the surrounding land. However, the minister has turned down that recommendation.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. According to Standing Order 15, a spokesman for an opposition party may reply briefly to a statement of the minister. Perhaps the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) would like to bring his comments to a close.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): If he sticks to the truth it will be very short.

Mr. Stevens: Thank you for your comments, Madam Speaker. As the minister has indicated, however, it has taken six years to get to this point and we in the opposition are very disturbed about what has happened. I should just like to conclude by asking all members if they think it is reasonable to believe that the Department of Transport and the minister propose to build a one-runway airport on 18,000 acres, with all the infrastructure that is required. As is pointed out in the Gibson report, new highways will be required, new sewer facilities and water facilities must be built, and it will lead to the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars. The fact is, of course, the government does not propose to build a mini-airport at Pickering at all. They are determined to build a super airport which will become another white elephant.

I earnestly hope that every member of this House will lend his voice in opposition to this foolish move by a minister who admits that his department is in a mess.

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Madam Speaker, the decision announced this afternoon on the Pickering airport rivals the decision made a couple of weeks ago on Syncrude, for economic and social irresponsibility. The minister did not announce plans for an international airport which would be part of a developed plan to integrate regional, national and international air services in Canada, as we might have expected. He has not presented the Pickering airport as part of a comprehensive transportation policy, but is continuing with the *ad hoc* type of decision-making that he has adopted since becoming minister.

In the statement the minister tabled, he said—I note he took care not to include this in his comments in the House because he knew we would have laughed him behind the curtains—that the Gibson report constitutes “an impartial report” of the problem. Nothing could be further from the truth, Madam Speaker. This report takes over, *holus-bolus*, the whole set of assumptions and the whole methodology that preceded the original decision made by the Department of Transport.

The whole report constitutes an apologia for a decision reached many months or years ago by the department. In fact, it has just cost the taxpayers a great deal of money to duplicate what had already been decided. It is ludicrous to suggest that the report is in any sense an impartial inquiry into the need for an international airport at Toronto. Not only is the report not impartial but it can be faulted on technical grounds. I am not going to transgress the rules of the House by going in detail into the criticisms that have been made of the report, but I do want to mention a couple of mistakes that one would have thought the experts in that field would not have made.

Pickering Airport

At one point the number of people affected by noise in the Malton area was calculated at twice the actual figure. The mathematicians began with a series of concentric circles: in the outer circle they made the mistake of adding on the number from the inner circle; thus, they came up with a figure for those affected by the noise level in the Malton area of twice the actual number. That is a simple technical mistake that one would have thought even ordinarily competent technicians would have spotted. Of course it is the kind of mistake that reinforces the minister's argument against expanding the Malton facility.

• (1730)

Apart from integrating this decision with an over-all transportation policy, which I for one had hoped the government would give us, if not this afternoon then at least in the expanded speech that the minister tabled, though it is not there either, the crucial point is that he should at least have established the need for an airport at Pickering. Forget the economic benefits and all the other considerations for the area; if we spend a minimum of \$1.5 billion of federal funds on an airport in the Pickering area or anywhere else, we have to establish need, and that the minister has not done. Surely this is the ultimate condemnation of his decision.

I want to refer, since the minister did in his remarks, to what I think he called the coming crisis in 1978-79 at Malton if some action of the kind he has now decided upon is not taken. Let us assume that the projections for 1978-79 turn out to be correct, though I do not assume they are correct. To go back to the methodology, this whole report was based on the cost of travel which existed prior to the energy crisis. It is incredible that the forecast of continued use of aircraft for travelling should have been assumed to be constant by the minister in light of the energy crisis.

It is stated as an assumption that one can expect air fares to diminish constantly. The fact is that air fares are going up, not down. However, let us assume, at least for 1978-79, that demands for air travel in the Malton area are what the minister anticipates. The point is that facilities at Malton could be expanded to take any additional air traffic without increasing to any significant degree the numbers of people who would be affected by the noise.

The minister knows—at least I hope he knows, though I am not always sure that is the case—that the number of those affected by noise in the Malton area between 1972 and 1973, instead of increasing, actually went down by some 33 per cent. Surely that fact is important. Why is the number going down? It is because of improved technology in aircraft. Aeroplanes are getting quieter, not noisier. They are also getting larger, so that a greater number of people can be carried by fewer planes, which itself reduces the total amount of noise. In addition, if you expand and use the runway facilities already at Malton in a sensible way, you can also decrease the number of people affected by noise.

The conclusion, therefore, is that even assuming the level of air traffic the minister assumes for the period 1978-79, Malton could have been expanded to take into account the increased number of flights without significantly increasing noise levels at all. Indeed, beyond that date because of all the improvements being made in con-