

have had some discussions with the provinces in that connection and regarding other programs in the broad field of urban transportation, with a view to determining whether we could find the most effective ways of assuring that those moneys were available for the items most needed. These discussions are leading to some further action and decision by the government which is still to be taken.

As for the other part of the question there is, of course, no specific plan for a rail link to Mirabel, and this is the part of the question which falls into the category that I described.

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### AIR TRANSPORT

#### APPLICATION OF QUEBECAIR TO FLY PASSENGERS FOR EUROPEAN AIRLINES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot):** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I am bent on trying to assist the government to save money, and I did notice in the papers a report that Mirabel last year lost in operating costs \$50 million. Has the government any desire to grant Quebecair the privilege of flying European passengers for European airlines from Toronto to Mirabel for which Quebec has asked permission and for which the European airlines are prepared to pay Quebecair?

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport):** At all times we are looking at the question of which air services will best provide convenience to passengers as well as the way in which maximum advantage can be drawn from the facility at Mirabel, with convenience to passengers very much in mind. I should say to the hon. member that there was an exchange in the House which was a little more precise than his reference to the \$50 million loss. When the figure of \$47 million is attributed to the Mirabel loss, which includes \$43 million loss in the interest on the debt, he will appreciate that this is carrying a full picture which was not common in the past and which is probably better said than not said, but it is a bookkeeping entry rather than an operating loss.

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### TRANSPORT

#### VIA CANADA PASSENGER SERVICE—ALLOTMENT OF FUNDS FOR PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT

**Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot):** I might say that one could study the answers for some time in order to determine just what was said.

I should like to ask the minister, in light of the announced intention of Via Canada passenger service, whether the government has given them any money for the purchase of rail cars and a rail system to put Via Canada into effect in the Quebec-Windsor corridor?

### Oral Questions

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport):** Appropriations will be made as required. We have called for and are now receiving and reviewing the tenders for from three to ten new train sets for that particular service. As soon as the tenders are evaluated, these will be ordered and produced. Of course, payments will be requested from parliament as the time frame and the order require.

#### PROPOSED ELIMINATION OF COMMUTER SERVICE IN MONTREAL AREA—GOVERNMENT ACTION

**Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Transport. Given the announcement of Canadian National and Canadian Pacific to the effect that they will immediately commence a phase-out of their commuter train operations within the area of metropolitan Montreal, thereby depriving approximately 100,000 people in the greater Montreal area of any means of commuting, may I ask the minister what programs or plans he has, given the fact that federalism is on trial in the province of Quebec at present, to discharge the commitments made by this government in 1974 to the people of Montreal?

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport):** As I said earlier in my answer to the hon. member for Crowfoot, we have in place a commuter program for which up to \$100 million is available to assist in the purchase of equipment and the like in connection with commuter services. It is a specific form of assistance for these types of commuter services. Of course, while federalism is very important, it is also true that certain things are the responsibilities of the provinces within that federalism. It has been our view that commuter services, and indeed urban transit services, are primarily the responsibility of the cities and provinces in which they are found, and while we have made various forms of assistance available to them, the responsibility rests primarily with the province and the city. That has been recognized in the case of Montreal by the creation of a committee under the previous government to study the total situation, and we hope it will produce results which will allow CN and CP services to continue.

**Mr. McGrath:** I have a supplementary question for the minister who seems to have a very short memory because in 1974 the government made this business of commuter transit a federal responsibility—

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. McGrath:** —by a solemn undertaking made by the minister's colleague, the then minister of urban affairs, and by the Prime Minister.

My question to the Minister of Transport is: given the fact that there is now considerable unrest within the Liberal caucus from members from metropolitan Montreal and metropolitan Toronto, including the hon. member for York East who has gone to the press on this, what programs is the minister prepared to discuss with CN and CP whereby the government of Canada, which still has responsibility for railways in this