

Adjournment Debate

We also ask for a second evaluation by Transport Canada of both airport sites, mainly from a security point of view.

The evasive answer the minister gave us led us to believe that everything was done behind closed doors and that he was not even advised. My question enabled him to learn that this whole reorganization was being planned in dark back rooms, away from the scrutiny of those concerned, and, therefore, without any consultation.

The people of Saguenay—Lac Saint-Jean do not want to have to put up with the same bungling as the people of Saint-Jean, when the military college was closed. There should be greater transparency when consulting with the committee, for the preservation of eastern region gliding school. Why rob Peter to pay Paul? This is the question.

[English]

Mr. John English (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Eastern Region Gliding School was situated in St-Honoré in the early 1970s because suitable accommodations for the cadets were available and the airport was conducive to glider training operations.

However several factors have resulted in the recommendation of the eastern region cadet staff to relocate the summer cadet gliding operations from the civilian airfield in St-Honoré to the municipal airport in St-Jean. The reasons are several.

First, one has to consider the ongoing efforts to reduce costs and improve the efficiency of cadet training.

Second, there is a substantial commercial cost required to house and feed the cadets in Chicoutimi.

Third, there are operational inefficiencies involved in moving aircraft and personnel resources every summer from the home base at the St-Jean airport, where are located the hangar and the offices, to the training location in St-Honoré, which is located at a distance of approximately 350 miles.

Finally one must note the decrease in the usage of the St-Jean megaplex coupled with improvement to the St-Jean airport.

Prior to undertaking the operational and financial analysis, full support for the proposal was received from the city of St-Jean, subject to noise reduction concerns. In accordance with Canadian law an environmental impact analysis was conducted.

A comparison of operations and flight safety measures between the airfields at St-Honoré and St-Jean clearly indicated the following benefits: an annual saving of approximately \$300,000 generated primarily by reduced costs of housing and feeding of staff and the air cadets at the CFB St-Jean megaplex.

Second is the availability of the main operating base hangar at the St-Jean airport to which the gliders and tow aircraft can be rapidly moved, thereby eliminating the possibility of environmental damage from the wind or hail compared to the situation at the St-Honoré base where the gliders and tow aircraft remain in the open over the entire summer training period.

Furthermore there is the non-restrictive glider takeoff and climb procedures at St-Jean compared to the restrictive ones imposed by the Chicoutimi airport authorities as a result of the noise concerns of St-Honoré residents.

In conclusion, flight safety is our number one consideration. This proposed move would not have been recommended if we had any concerns over flight safety.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Let me express season's greetings to Canadians from coast to coast.

[Translation]

To all Canadians, from coast to coast, season's greetings.

[English]

Pursuant to Standing Order 38 the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, pursuant to order made earlier today, the House stands adjourned until Monday, February 6, 1995 at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Orders 28 and 24.

(The House adjourned at 5.18 p.m.)