

Saint Jérôme Suggested Airport Site

[English]

I would also like to say a few words in English and ask the minister, now that he has settled one problem, to let the house know and clarify for us the negotiations he has undertaken, or will undertake, with the provincial authorities of Ontario or the municipalities concerning a second airport to be built in Toronto.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: Order. I should remind the hon. member that this is not yet the question period. Regulations allow him only to comment at this time on the statement that has been made.

The hon. member will have an opportunity later on to ask any questions that come to his mind now.

Mr. Valade: Mr. Speaker, I conclude by saying that the decision is quite acceptable and that we are happy that the government has finally made its mind up. It is the first decision taken so far by the Minister of Transport and we are happy about it.

[English]

Mr. Ed Schreyer (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, the announcement made today by the Minister of Transport is a long awaited one. The reasons the minister gave for making this particular choice seem, on the surface at least, to be plausible enough. But I think it must be said that simply because we were not privy to many of the representations and arguments presented to the minister, we really have no way of knowing whether the reasons the minister put forward today are genuine and profound or are superficial. I think the minister must appreciate that this is the position in which we find ourselves.

[Translation]

For instance, Mr. Speaker, we would like to know whether the federal government has given enough consideration to the advice given and to the views of the province of Quebec, before a final decision was taken.

I have a similar question, and I ask if there was the same type of consultation with the Department of Regional Economic Expansion?

[English]

The minister has not taken the opportunity to give the house a full and detailed account as to why this particular site was chosen in preference to others. Anyone who has been following closely the stories in *La Presse* and other newspapers in Quebec can easily see

[Mr. Valade.]

that many alternative sites and locations were being put forward. I recall, for example, that about two months ago there was a lead story in Montreal *La Presse* to the effect that a decision could not be taken in February because the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce was out of the country. It was said that no decision could be taken relative to the location of the airport until the minister returned to this country. One can obviously see that the Minister of National Defence was not out of Canada in recent weeks.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Schreyer: It would be helpful and useful to the house and parliament generally if the minister would indicate precisely what was the relationship between himself, his department and the Transport Commission, for example, relative to all the negotiations and studies made with regard to the question of choosing this site. One should assume—I say “should assume”—that the Canadian Transport Commission was consulted very closely with regard to this question.

Now that the Minister of Transport has got rid of one problem that was facing him in recent months, now that he has made the choice, is he prepared to give equal effort and time to arriving at a decision relative to the International Airport in Winnipeg?

● (2:50 p.m.)

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, we know at last where the new international airport will be located: at St. Jérôme 26 miles from Montreal.

The minister stated that a task force made up of representatives of the federal Departments of Transport and Regional Economic Expansion, four Quebec departments and the city of Montreal, decided on the exact site where the new airport is to be built.

In his statement the minister said also that this will stimulate the economic development of that area.

Therefore, I wonder why the minister did not contemplate building the international airport at Rouyn, for instance, if he really wants to facilitate regional development.

For if we consider that the new airport will contribute to the economic development of