

and the people there that job security is assured. If such a decision is taken, those who could be affected will be guaranteed jobs in Saskatchewan in the public service, if they want to stay.

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AIRPORTS

PLANS FOR EXPANSION OF MOUNT HOPE FACILITY

Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth): Madam Speaker, since this government took office, we in the Hamilton area have not heard a peep out of the Minister of Transport, and certainly nothing official from his department, about his plans for expansion of the airport at Mount Hope.

● (1500)

Can the minister tell us now whether the government will adhere to the \$45 million commitment of the previous Conservative administration, or does he intend to revise upward or downward government spending on Hamilton's ticky-tacky terminal and airport facilities?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Among other things, I did have a conversation with the Ontario minister of transportation on this very subject: he has a great interest in that particular item. A couple of things came up. One of them was that we would pursue the definition of the "concept"—that word is in quotation marks—or the orientation of the runway, which is still uncertain and needs clarification. Another thing that would be done—

An hon. Member: Come on.

Mr. Pepin: I am using technical words that I did not know the meaning of two months ago. That is how fast I can learn.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order. Since the question period is coming to an end, would the minister please make his answer as brief as possible?

Mr. Pepin: Yes, Madam Speaker, I was about to mention that there is another aspect of very great importance, namely, the servicing of that airport by Air Canada. There are a number of negotiations to take place in that connection because it would be rather useful to have the assurance of regular service if the airport is to be expanded.

Mr. Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth): I would still like to know whether the government is going ahead with the \$45 million expansion program which had been approved by the previous government. Also, will the minister undertake to meet personally with the mayors of the greater Hamilton area to iron out some of these outstanding problems? Can he give us an assurance that the airport expansion plan will go ahead?

Privilege—Mr. W. Baker

Mr. Pepin: I was trying to say that the promise which was made by the previous government will be honoured if it makes sense to do so—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepin:—which involves the information I am looking for at the present time.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. BAKER (NEPEAN-CARLETON)—ECONOMIC REMARKS OF MINISTER OF FINANCE—RULING BY MADAM SPEAKER

Madam Speaker: Order. On Tuesday, April 22 last, the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) raised, as a question of privilege, the participation in the address debate the day before by the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen). I have now had an opportunity of reviewing the arguments presented on both sides of the question of privilege. Essentially, the Chair has to determine whether the Minister of Finance has breached the privileges of the House.

Perhaps a brief examination of the criteria for a question of privilege or for contempt would be appropriate at this time. Privilege relates to the obstruction of members in the discharge of their parliamentary duties and contempt relates to manifestations of disrespect for this House. The facts set out by the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton and the complaint he raises relates rather to the manner in which the Minister of Finance was proceeding during the proceedings in Parliament last Monday night.

Our ways and means practice, that is to say, our practice regarding taxation proposals, was changed fairly substantially in January, 1969. Until then, most matters of taxation were dealt with in the committee of ways and means, in which the taxing resolution preceding the bill was subject to debate. The House resolved itself into a committee of ways and means by the vehicle of a government order which permitted the Speaker simply to leave the chair.

When it came to the traditional "budget presentations", the House embarked on that debate by a debatable motion for the Speaker to leave the chair in order for the House to resolve itself into a committee of ways and means. When that debate ended, the ways and means motions based on the budget were adopted after debate in the committee of ways and means, and bills based on these motions were then introduced.

The practice since 1969 is for a ways and means motion to be tabled by a minister at any time during a sitting without notice, provided that it may not be dealt with until a later sitting, and then without debate. With respect to the budget presentation, notice is given by the government to designate a day certain for its presentation and a six day debate follows. The ways and means motions—taxation proposals—which always flow from such budget presentations are tabled during the budget presentation and are treated the same way as those