

Toronto Airport Expansion

has been adequate opportunity for all appropriate submissions to be received and considered thoroughly.

• (2:20 p.m.)

I want to say a word also about the so-called downtown airport. At the present time there is on Toronto Island a small airport that serves the general aviation needs of the area. For several years this airport has been operated by the Toronto Harbour Commission which has custody of the facility. Some time ago published reports stated that the government of Ontario was considering a redevelopment plan known as Harbour City. Reports indicated that this plan would involve the closing of the present Toronto Island airport with the site being used for housing and other purposes. The federal government is in no position to comment on that proposal until its full implications are known.

This proposal of course raises questions as to the desirability of having any form of airport facility in the downtown area. Insofar as the Ministry of Transport is concerned, this is largely a matter for the residents of the Toronto area and their elected representatives. The role of the Ministry of Transport has been simply to examine the technical feasibility of establishing any form of new airport at a downtown location bearing in mind that most aviation and airport planners feel that in future very large metropolitan areas need to be served by a conveniently located facility, particularly for inter-city air travel.

I want to emphasize that the Minister of Transport has made no decision as to the advisability of such a downtown airport but is simply examining the widest possible range of alternatives with a view to meeting the transportation needs of this important area.

From a technical standpoint we have now determined that no waterfront site can accommodate any type of jet aircraft as we know them today. Therefore any planning for inter-city travel could only be implemented if and when new types of aircraft, such as the so called STOL or short takeoff and landing planes, are available. For these reasons there appears to be no possibility that a new commercial airport will be built on the waterfront in the foreseeable future. It is considered advisable, however, that the probability of future need be taken into account in any long-range planning for the area. Should the Harbour City project proceed as planned, it would mean that there would be no down-

[Mr. Jamieson.]

town airport of any kind in Toronto, but I repeat that this is a decision that must be made by the local representatives.

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to reply to the minister's statement on aviation facilities for the Toronto area. I recall that a statement of a similar nature was made a few months ago. Today's statement has added nothing. I am very surprised that, with all the facilities and resources the minister has and in view of the fact that he has been in consultation with the province and the municipalities, a site has not yet been chosen. I am pleased to see that the statement has narrowed down the area.

It is most important, I believe, that the people of the three or four likely areas which may be affected by this airport should know sooner than the government is planning to tell them where the site will be because it seems to me, having attended many urban affairs forums, that the people are becoming frustrated. In light of the possibility of their land being gobbled up by the federal government, they need to have advice soon concerning where the particular site will be.

Keeping in mind the necessity of making decisions on ground transportation services, potential industrial development and urban policy, it is imperative that the minister make as full disclosure as possible to those municipalities which are likely to be affected. I do not know how many there are. The minister said there were three or four. In keeping with the just society and participatory democracy, the minister should make every attempt to announce in the very near future where the probable site will be. The people are extremely concerned about the unilateral or even bilateral approach to this matter without those who will be directly affected being given an opportunity to have any say concerning the site. I hope the minister will be able to assure us that, before any final decision is taken on approval of the site, those who will be directly affected, other than the elected representatives of any particular municipality, will be given an opportunity to present briefs and will be given a full hearing so that we can say they at least had the opportunity to give the government some guidance in respect of the site.

Finally, I hope that the next time the minister speaks on this matter he will indicate to the House and the country that he has chosen a site.