

I therefore invite the Government to put its trust in the Scan-Davie consortium, whose proposal complies in every way with the standards and conditions set by the Department of National Defence.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

AIR CANADA

LOCATION OF HEAD OFFICE—LETTER WRITTEN BY FORMER
CLERK OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. It concerns a matter we have not touched on for a few days. In view of the Transport Committee's decision this morning to postpone Air Canada matters until September 13 when the Chairman and President of Air Canada will be recalled as witnesses, can the Minister tell the House why Michael Pitfield, then Clerk of the Privy Council, wrote to the Minister about the future development of the McGill College Avenue area of Montreal, which was one of the places where Air Canada was considering locating its head office?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I would think it would be normal for Mr. Pitfield in his former capacity to write to me or to other Ministers expressing his views or the views of the Prime Minister on matters of this kind. I do not see anything abnormal in that.

MINISTER'S DISCUSSIONS WITH CHAIRMAN

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that the Minister does not think there is anything unusual about this, is he prepared to table the letter and any other correspondence so that there will be no question of any improper advice?

After the Minister received the letter, and as a result of the letter, did the Minister call in the Chairman of Air Canada, Mr. Rene Amyot, and discuss the contents of the letter with him, especially in view of the fact that the letter appeared to have been influenced by or directed to have been written by the Chairman?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, the letter comes under the "advice to the Minister" category and consequently is not one that would be made public. My hon. friend seems to be well informed of the content. It was a suggestion that, if at all needed, I should pay particular attention to the developments taking place in Montreal on the decision with respect to the purchase of a headquarters.

I did much more than was referred to in the letter. I sense that my hon. friend might have seen it. I went to Montreal where I spent a full day with the two main candidates studying

their plans. I talked extensively to the personnel of Air Canada, the Chairman and the President and I developed my own feelings about the whole subject. Later on the decision was made unanimously by the Board of Air Canada in the way which my hon. friend knows.

Mr. Nowlan: If there is no real problem with the letter, if it could be tabled, it would help to clarify this matter, which has many confusing elements to it. I hope the Minister might see his way clear to do that.

NATURE OF DISCUSSIONS WITH CHAIRMAN

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Madam Speaker, the Minister did not quite answer my second question. As a result of the letter, did the Minister call in the Chairman of the Board of Air Canada and discuss the contents of that letter with him? As a result of that conversation did he tell, direct, or suggest to the Chairman of Air Canada that he should have no further discussion with the Clerk of the Privy Council, Michael Pitfield, or the Prime Minister, unless there was a member of the Minister's staff or someone representing the Minister present?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, as I said, I went to Montreal. The Chairman, the President, and staff of Air Canada were there. The two main candidates, Trizec and Quebec Première, came there to make representations, with drawings and explanations, and answered questions. The Chairman was there and, as we were going along, I had discussions with him. A few days later there was a meeting of the board of Air Canada at which members made the decision to go the Trizec way. It was unanimous. What else could I have done?

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● (1420)

THE DISABLED AND THE HANDICAPPED

DESIGNATION OF SECRETARY OF STATE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister I too will direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Deputy Prime Minister will know that the Special parliamentary Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped recommended the appointment of a Minister of State responsible for the status of disabled persons, some two years ago. I wonder if the Deputy Prime Minister could tell the House whether or not that appointment will be made later this day or in the near future, and if he could further tell us who it is likely to be, and to which Department that person will be attached.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I will try to answer the question not as the Deputy