

Supply

for Transport. At times, one might wonder who speaks for what.

An Hon. Member: They are in consultation with each other.

Mr. Lapierre: They are in consultation with each other, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that the Minister of Transport will take care—

An Hon. Member: He is coaching him.

Mr. Lapierre:—will take care of the commitment made by his Minister of State, that they can discuss it, and most importantly, that they can act upon it Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Exactly.

Mr. Lapierre: I am convinced of one thing, Mr. Speaker, namely that, when a decision is made, it will not be submitted to the committee.

The Minister of Transport is probably explaining to his Minister of State that he should not have committed himself so quickly because you must first consider the issue, and then delay the process. Mr. Speaker, who promised the moon to the Canadian people, and especially to Quebecers before this Government was elected? Of course, everyone knows this, but it is especially true as concerns transport, and the Members opposite have not delivered yet. They have had opportunities to make firm commitments, but in every case, the matter has been referred to review committees. Will they be considering these issues until the next election so that they can make the same promises a second time, Mr. Speaker? This is the question which we must ask ourselves. If they believe transport to be so essential for the economy of Quebec and of Canada as a whole, why are they still trying to hide behind a multitude of review committees?

I am anxious to hear the Minister of State for Transport in coming weeks and months speak to the House about the Crow rate, and I am anxious to hear the Quebec Members opposite speak about the Crow rate, about the question of whether the payments should be made to the railways or to the farmers, and so on. I am convinced that they will set up another review committee and that they will again consider the matter for quite a while in an effort to reconcile their differences.

Mr. Speaker, I think that, during the last few months, all Canadians, and especially Quebecers, have realized that most of the commitments that were made are now being postponed or shelved. I hope and trust that the Minister of State for Transport intends to solve certain issues, and I am convinced that, if he had the authority to do so and if his colleague, the Minister of Finance, did not put roadblocks in his way by cutting the VIA budget and if the other Minister of Transport stopped piling up review committees, he could make decisions to follow up on the commitments made by his own colleagues. I come back once more to the people of the South Shore because everyone knows how important this issue was during the election campaign. Everybody knows it was promised to

the South Shore people. Everybody knows that in the Eastern Townships, VIA Rail was the main issue during the election campaign, and now he comes here and says he is going to do it. But then there will be studies. Well, who is running that department—the task forces, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), or the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Nielsen)?

Those are a few examples which show that, in transportation as in many other areas, after bringing down the hatchet, after reneging on their commitments, the Members of that Government try to hide behind one or any number of committees. Hopefully they will have the courage to go back to the constituencies where they made those commitments. Did you know, Mr. Speaker, that all our Canadian airports should be getting new asphalt runways if we were to believe the promises made by the Progressive Conservative candidates during the election campaign?

In the Eastern Townships, the Sherbrooke airport should be extraordinarily well repaired. The Bromont airport should be extended to 9,000 feet, if I am not mistaken. Honourable Members may know that the Minister of State for Transport (Mr. Bouchard) would prefer 10,000 feet, while we might be satisfied with 9,000 feet. However, that was a commitment. What did the Minister say in the course of his non-partisan consultation? He said: Well, we are going to consider the matter. But when those election promises were made, what he had in mind was not consideration but action. Once more we find he is trying to put off the issue, in order perhaps to work on it before the next election, or better still to promise it all over again. However, the people will not be fooled, Mr. Speaker. I am sure the Minister of State for Transport is ill at ease. I sympathize with him for realizing that he cannot deliver what was promised to the people in La Prairie, Brome Missisquoi, and Sherbrooke.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps they did not have enough pull with the Minister of Finance, and when this Department did not get its full share, they simply said: Let us announce cutbacks and then we shall make the same promises again; there will be no problem. But this is not what had been promised, and we shall be following with keen interest the actions of the Department of Transport during the coming weeks and months. I am now drawing up a list of all the commitments that were made. Should the memory of the Minister of State for Transport fail him, we will send him a copy of this list and he can then advise us of the dates on which the commitments were met. I hope it will be within the next four years, Mr. Speaker! This will certainly run into millions of dollars, but I hope that the Minister will convince his colleague, the Minister of State for Finance (Mrs. McDougall) to grant him all the funds required. The Minister of State for Finance must also be convinced . . . I am certain that also she is ready to let the axe fall.