

Oral Questions

● (1142)

[Translation]

AIRPORTS**INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO CONSTRUCT
TERMINAL BUILDING AT ÎLES-DE-LA-MADELEINE**

Mr. Albert Béchard (Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Transport.

In view of what is known so far about the studies of Department of Transport experts on the construction of an airport in the Îles-de-la-Madeleine, whether jets or Dash-7 type of aircraft use it eventually, and with the advent of the MLS, and in view of the cramped quarters and therefore the total lack of comfort of what is now known as the Îles-de-la-Madeleine terminal building, can the minister tell the House whether he intends to order the construction of a decent terminal building in the Îles-de-la-Madeleine this year in order to calm the justified impatience of that island population and, must I add, their MP?

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's impatience with developments in that particular airport area. We have now well advanced examination of the question of the use of the Dash-7 for several airports there. That will help us to decide what is needed in the way of further facilities. In the last few days a member from my office, as well as my officials, have been visiting the island airport. I will have from them a first-hand report on the nature of the quality of the terminal facilities and also recommendations upon which I expect to be able to act very quickly for their improvement.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION**PROGRAMS FOR NORTHERN MANITOBA**

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. In 1976, his department and the government of Manitoba signed the Northland agreement under which the federal and provincial governments, on a shared cost basis, would spend \$138 million for development and the employment of people in northern Manitoba.

The present government of Manitoba has cut back those programs very, very drastically and hundreds of people have been laid off by the provincial department of northern affairs. Over 1,000 people involved in projects on an hourly basis have been laid off. Was the minister's department consulted about these decisions? Was agreement arrived at with the province to proceed with these very severe cutbacks in employment?

[Translation]

Hon. Marcel Lessard (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, indeed there have been consultations and exchanges between the officials of my department and those of the Manitoba government. As we know, the government having changed there, the new government decided to reduce considerably some of its programs and expenditures. Recently, we were advised that they wanted to reduce expenditures under the agreement on the development of lands in northern Manitoba, but I must say to the hon. member that we did not accept that those reductions be allotted to other purposes within the agreement. We will accept transfers of funds provided the main purposes of the agreement are respected. But if there is any intention of redirecting those amounts to new programs, new projects and new objectives, I think we will oppose our contributing to them.

[English]

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, under certain programs, such as the New Careers program, in which I think some 500 people were involved, the provincial government was required to find employment in its various departments when the people involved had finished their training. In the view of the federal government, is the provincial government required under the agreement it signed, to which program the federal government has contributed a great deal of money, to find employment for the people who are now in the training program?

Is the minister's department continuing to pass on 60 per cent of the \$138 million which the federal government has to pay under this agreement? Is it continuing to pay its share when it now knows that substantial parts of that program have been either reduced or eliminated?

Mr. Lessard: Mr. Speaker, referring to the last part of the hon. member's question, I should say that if they have reduced the program we are not going to pay our 60 per cent of the cost. That money will be spent on and applied to other projects which are not under the agreement.

As to the first part of the question, the commitment that people trained under the program would be given a job within the Manitoba civil service was made in an attempt to achieve that end. We understand it is always difficult when there is no need for jobs. When a government decides to cut off a program and reduce the number of its public servants, it is always difficult to find jobs for newcomers. Obviously, there will be a need for comprehension of that difficulty. Nevertheless, we will be pushing the provincial government to help find jobs for these people. We will try to help find jobs for them as soon as they come out of the training program.