

Saint Jérôme Suggested Airport Site

impacts. The aim was to assess the stimulus that would be given to regional development, taking into account Canadian, Quebec and regional priorities.

After a careful assessment of the technical, cost and developmental factors identified by these studies, the cabinet has concluded that the new Montreal International Airport will be built north of Montreal, near the City of Saint-Jérôme. This site, 26 miles north of the centre of Montreal and 17 miles from Dorval airport, will meet the changing patterns in air traffic and technology, including jumbo jets and supersonic aircraft, for the foreseeable future. It fits with regional development strategies and will provide the greatest benefits for the growth of the Montreal region and of the Quebec economy generally.

The location will provide for safe flight operations without interfering with activity at Dorval. It suffers from no restrictions because of natural or man-made obstacles. The runways can be oriented in the most favourable directions for the prevailing winds, without bad effects on adjoining urban areas. The incidence of fog and freezing rain are less than at other points in the Montreal region.

● (2:40 p.m.)

The site is well located to serve the majority of the users, who will largely be drawn from the centre, west and north of the Montreal metropolis. It is well integrated with existing and proposed ground transportation networks and it will be possible to provide easy access to Dorval Airport. This will facilitate cargo and passenger connections, and thus ensure continued optimum utilization of the present airport.

From the economic point of view, the northern site will maximize the essential close interaction between the Montreal area itself and the new International airport. Easy access to the scientific, cultural and other amenities of Montreal, and to the leisure centres of the Laurentians, will offer good inducements for the location of technologically advanced industries and their staffs. The site will thus foster the most desirable forms of development for Jesus Island and the corridor between the airport and Montreal. With planning, it will be possible to accelerate the spill-over of these developments along an east-west axis toward Trois Rivières and Quebec City. Accordingly the location of the airport will make an important contribution to the prosperity of both the Montreal region and Quebec as a whole.

[Translation]

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, in the statement we have just heard the Minister of Transport has not told us anything that we did not already know, but has merely confirmed a rumour that has been growing for some time.

As a matter of fact, I asked the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer) yesterday whether he could give us the assurance that the new airport would be located in the Sainte-Thérèse area. Unfortunately, Your Honour decided that my question was out of order and the minister did not give me any answer. I suggest that if he refused to answer, it may have been because he wanted to make a statement today and to tell us himself something that we knew already.

Mr. Speaker, this lengthy statement reveals that it took the government three years to choose a site for the new airport. Indeed, the minister stated clearly that studies began in 1966, and we are now in 1969. Only three years later do we finally get to know the decision of the present government.

I am happy about the chosen site, but I deplore that all this shuffling has kept us waiting so long for a decision. However, it is becoming more and more typical of the present government and we hope, Mr. Speaker, that it will not take as long to get the construction of the airport under way as it did to come to a decision about the site.

I know that this decision will not please all the areas which sent delegates to make representations to the federal government, but I take this opportunity to congratulate the representatives of the municipalities of various areas who worked eagerly for the establishment of the airport in their own area. However, I think that a decision had to be taken and following the arguments stated by the minister concerning the security of flights, the weather, the land, the proximity of Dorval, all those factors make the decision quite acceptable.

I would also say that the Quebec government behaved wisely also when it accepted that choice, even if the airport is to be located in the constituency of the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Cadieux). I think there is nothing against it since that fact does not affect the value of the decision.

Mr. Speaker, let us hope that a decision will be made without delay about the early construction of that second airport and that Montreal will benefit shortly from the advantages involved.