

Oral Questions

Mr. Rae: Madam Speaker, I am sure the minister would agree there is a very serious difference between conducting interviews and the kind of investigation carried out by the RCMP, or the kind of investigation which is called for under the terms of the supervision section both of the old Bank Act and the new Bank Act. I would point out to the minister that under the terms of the new Bank Act, which came into force yesterday, he has the power to order the Inspector General to carry out an investigation, and the Inspector General has all the powers of a commissioner under the Inquiries Act. With respect to these transactions, which, in our view, are extremely serious indeed, would the minister agree to order the Inspector General to carry out such an investigation under the terms of the Inquiries Act, and not simply be satisfied with a series of interviews with a number of people who may or may not have been involved?

Mr. MacEachen: Madam Speaker, the Inspector General of Banks himself described his activities as an investigation. Following the conclusion of his investigation, he decided that there had been no impropriety. I have since discussed the matter with the Inspector General of Banks, and since events in the spring he has had no further reason to launch an investigation. The hon. member has indicated that there may have been a police investigation, but I am sure he would be the first to agree that that is not a matter into which the Inspector General of Banks should intrude himself.

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[Translation]

AIRPORTS

INCREASE IN PASSENGER TRAFFIC AT MALTON, EDMONTON
AND CALGARY

Mr. Robert Gourd (Argenteuil): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. In light of a report published yesterday by Michel Gratton of the newspaper *Le Droit* can the minister confirm that there has been an increase in passenger traffic at the Malton, Edmonton and Calgary airports? Can he also tell us what steps he intends to take to improve conditions at Mirabel, the largest airport in Canada, and make it profitable?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I imagine the hon. member refers to higher landing fees for small planes at the four main airports in Canada. If not, I would ask him to repeat his question—because I did not understand it very well.

Mr. Gourd: Madam Speaker, I did refer the minister to the increase of passenger traffic mentioned in the report written by Michel Gratton of *Le Droit*.

Mr. Pepin: Madam Speaker, that announcement was made in the budget laid down by the Minister of Finance. The

announcement made yesterday was only an extension of that decision.

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[English]

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

STEPS TO CURTAIL USE OF DIOXIN TCDD CHEMICAL

Mr. Tom McMillan (Hillsborough): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. As he knows, Canadian scientists have today confirmed that dioxin TCDD has been found throughout Lake Ontario and other lakes in Canada from which Canadians derive their drinking water and obtain their fish. Dioxin is one of the deadliest man-made chemicals in the world. It is known to promote cancer and to cause severe birth defects in humans.

● (1440)

Will the Minister of the Environment assure the House that the Government of Canada will take immediate steps, either alone or in concert with the provinces, to have banned all industrial or consumer products containing dioxin? Will the minister also take steps to ensure that the deposit of dioxin in drinking water is outlawed? In addition, will he ensure that the disposal of any industrial waste containing dioxin will be outlawed, as has been done or is being done in the United States? Will he show leadership along the lines of the leadership taken in the United States but not taken in Canada?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): Yes, Madam Speaker, I can confirm that this morning I did release the scientific findings to which the hon. gentleman has referred. Those findings make it clear that there are traces, although very small quantities, of dioxin in the Great Lakes.

The two sources for the provision of those dioxins are both in the United States. As a result, my colleague the Secretary of State for External Affairs is addressing a note to the United States which is in the final drafting stages and should be sent within the next 48 hours, outlining to the United States the information which we have, drawing it to their attention and asking for a thorough investigation, as well as requesting that they take urgent steps to remedy this situation.

My department is also in touch with other departments of the Canadian government. We are proceeding with our studies to try to isolate more clearly the significance of these findings. We are continuing our own work to try and establish clearly the source points and the consequences of these facts. I have also instructed my department to be in touch with the International Joint Commission so that the information we have is brought to their attention in order that they may issue their advice to both governments of the United States and Canada as to what action should be taken.

Mr. McMillan: Madam Speaker, my supplementary is addressed to the Minister of the Environment and is in connec-