

*Oral Questions***AIRPORTS**

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. The previous Liberal government gave an unprecedented 49-year lease on the Boundary Bay airport in Delta when it was re-activated in 1983. Since the lease was granted there have been many complaints both from individuals and companies who utilize the airport. Until recently all of these complaints had been essentially stonewalled in the political and bureaucratic system.

In order to clarify the situation at Boundary Bay, would the minister consider an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the granting of the lease and the operating record of the lease holders? In view of the fact that a new group wants to take over that lease, would the minister consider either cancelling or renegotiating the lease so that the municipality of Delta would be involved in the operation and management of this very important economic generator in Delta?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my friend for his question. I know that he is a former alderman for the city of Delta. The airport of Boundary Bay represents one of the key factors in the development of air transportation in the Vancouver area.

I know that the officers of the department are working particularly on this file but I would like to undertake, on his request, to make my own investigation about this lease. I will report to the member later.

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FORESTRY

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Forestry. Given the fact that forestry is the single largest sector of the economy in New Brunswick, employing approximately 38,000 people and accounting for 47 per cent of the total exports in the province of New Brunswick, I am interested to know from the minister when the ERDA, the economic agreement between the federal and provincial governments, will be signed. Given the fact that the fisheries and agricultural agreements have

already been signed, can the minister expedite this as quickly as possible?

• (1150)

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State (Forestry)): Mr. Speaker, I am able to confirm that sufficient resources have been identified to construct and negotiate an agreement with New Brunswick. In fact \$91 million has been earmarked for a new agreement. Such an agreement will satisfy the needs of the forestry community as well as accommodating certain important national objectives.

I want to thank the hon. member for his constructive input and I can tell him that negotiations are going very well. I should be in a position very soon to announce and sign the agreement.

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EDUCATION

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Secretary of State. The Canadian Federation of Students is here today in Ottawa from all across Canada. Representatives from colleges, universities and other institutions of higher learning are here to fight the brutal attack of government on higher education. There has been a \$7 billion slash of transfer payments over eight years, less money for training and retraining, and the government has not honoured its promises in research and development.

What will the minister and this government do to ensure that we do secure the future of our youth, that we protect our competitiveness, that we not put the nation at risk, that we have the human intellectual capital to be leaders and not followers?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, we recognize this as a very high priority; it is a national priority. Our human resource development is very important for our international competitiveness. It is not necessarily the amount of money that is being put into the program. We now have the second highest public sector spending in the world, from what I understand, second only to Sweden.

What is important to note is that there is a desire by many Canadians to examine the full system and see whether we are effectively getting the maximum use of the resources available.