

AIRPORTS

MIRABEL—STAFFING LEVELS

Mr. Bill Wright (Calgary North): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport and it relates to one of the government's white elephants, namely, Mirabel International Airport. Mirabel has three times as many employees as Calgary International Airport, yet Mirabel handles only one third the number of passengers that Calgary does. Could the minister tell us whether Mirabel is over-staffed or whether Calgary International Airport is under-staffed?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I have not made a study of that question in depth. I am quite sure that Mirabel has justification for the number of staff employed there. I am quite sure that Calgary is in a similar situation. Again, I have not done an in-depth analysis of the factors.

● (1425)

POSSIBLE TRANSFER OF SERVICES FROM DORVAL

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Madam Speaker, my brief supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Is an announcement about transferring any air services in the near future from Dorval to Mirabel contemplated soon?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, indeed this question is being studied at the moment.

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CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

RESIGNATION OF CHAIRMAN

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport respecting the circumstances surrounding the resignation of Robert Bandeen as president of CNR. Mr. Bandeen's sudden departure has resulted in speculation about the reasons; some say that there was a dispute with the board of directors of CNR. Does the minister know the real reason for Dr. Bandeen's resignation? Was it related to his endorsement of the \$50 million investment in the ill-fated CAST shipping group, which is now in financial difficulty? Will the minister tell the House why such a high profile public servant would quit so unexpectedly?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, when Dr. Bandeen resigned he issued a communiqué—and I will be glad to send a copy to my hon. friend—in which he explained that after some seven or eight years directing CN he was looking for other challenges. I have no reason to doubt that this was the reason.

Oral Questions

ASSISTANCE TO CAST SHIPPING GROUP

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question. I asked the minister whether he knew the real reason, not simply the ones which have been stated. I want to ask him about the CAST shipping group and what has been happening in the last few weeks with respect to that ill-fated company. The minister must know that CAST has been refused credit by CNR and is now appealing for help from international bankers. He certainly knows that \$50 million in public funds has been invested in this organization through the Canadian National Railways, notwithstanding that it was characterized as a "James Bond" type of operation. Will the government and CNR continue to support the CAST shipping group and to provide assistance, since I understand that Dr. Bandeen and other officers of CNR are now in Europe investigating the possibility of providing further financial assistance to this organization?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): No, Madam Speaker. Indeed there are difficulties related in the press with respect to the CAST company. As my hon. friend has said, CN has an interest in the company. At the moment the board of CN is fully in charge of the matter, is treating it as a commercial one, and is trying to protect or safeguard its interests and investment in CAST and also the benefits which Canada as a whole and CN in particular have gathered from their association with CAST.

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INDUSTRY

DEFICIT IN MANUFACTURING TRADE—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. The Minister of State for Economic Development said some time ago that if a country comes to Canada wanting to buy iron, we do not try to sell that country steel. Another bit of economic wisdom was uttered on the weekend by the same minister when he said that the Liberal government is no longer concerned that Canadians are seen as "hewers of wood and drawers of water". In this context he said that the Liberals will continue to try to sell off our resources. Considering that there was a deficit of \$21 billion in our manufacturing trade last year, representing some 200,000 Canadian jobs if the manufacturing had been done here, will the minister now confirm that Senator Olson has replaced his, the minister's industrial strategy, with the old Liberal policy of resource sell-offs?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, I understand it is Senator Olson's view that the quotations attributed to him in recent press reports were incomplete and taken out of context.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!