

Location of new International Airport

Canadian taxpayers. How many more leaks, how much land speculation and what kind of nonsense will we allow to go on if this continues?

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that I made out a prima facie case if there ever was a prima facie case set out in the House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Woolliams: I hear these barks in the distance, but you will be howling soon.

I make the following motion:

That the question of information of the announcement of the new Montreal international airport at or near St. Jérôme, Quebec, having been given prior to the said announcement by the government in the House of Commons and including all the circumstances under which the allegation is made, be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections of the house, so that a full inquiry and investigation may be made, and that the said committee be empowered to examine all persons and papers material to the matter in question.

Mr. Speaker: The decision which the Chair has to make before putting the motion proposed by the hon. member is to determine whether there is a prima facie case. However, before doing so it would be normal for the house to hear the ministers to whom the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) referred. It is obviously impossible for the Chair to make this kind of decision without hearing the views and comments of the ministers to whom the hon. member referred in his statement.

I doubt very much whether there is any point in pursuing the matter further at this time. I realize that the Prime Minister might want to take part in the discussion, but if we have a debate at this time I would still be unable to make a decision now. So if hon. members agree with my suggestion, we should hold the matter in abeyance because I cannot be placed in the position of ruling on the question of a prima facie aspect of the allegation now.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I can well appreciate the position in which Your Honour finds yourself, in that you cannot give a decision on the prima facie aspect of the question of privilege in the absence of the ministers. May I respectfully suggest that Your Honour consider requesting that those ministers come into the chamber, assuming that they are in town, so that the matter can be dealt with now instead of awaiting their convenience.

[Mr. Woolliams.]

Mr. Trudeau: I should like to speak on the point of order, Mr. Speaker. I feel I may be able to say a few things which might assist you in deciding whether or not there is a prima facie case. Some of the facts are relevant to this.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The right hon. Prime Minister should address himself to the point of order raised by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis).

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I shall address myself to this point of order. I should like to say first that it is impossible for the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer) to be here because he is in Toronto now. The other minister could be here, but I can tell the house the facts which he would state. This may help you in the decision concerning the airport which was announced yesterday afternoon.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Again I suggest to the right hon. Prime Minister that although he feels he should make a statement which might help to clarify the situation I feel very strongly that the matter should be held in abeyance until statements can be made which might assist the Chair in making a final decision on the prima facie aspect of the proposed motion.

• (11:40 a.m.)

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, on the point of order raised by the hon. member for York South, could this matter be suspended until after the noon recess, so that every effort could be made to not only bring the Minister of Forestry and Rural Development back here, but also the Minister of Transport?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Baldwin: This is the weekend. This matter is very important, and I assume it is also important to the ministers concerned. Surely its importance justifies every effort being made to bring them back. It may well be that by two o'clock Your Honour may have heard from the Prime Minister that the ministers will be back here this afternoon in order that Your Honour may deal with the preliminary matter of a prima facie case.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, concerning the point of order raised by