

Inquiries of the Ministry

[English]

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): There have been discussions and they are continuing, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the winding up of Expo and the postponement of debt which was requested by the government of the province of Quebec. These are continuing and I hope they will be settled in the near future. It is not a matter of principle. It is a matter of detail that is involved and the detail has to be worked out. We are anxious to have the Expo Corporation wound up, and the added security for the government of Canada for the debt which is receivable from the city of Montreal and the province of Quebec.

[Translation]

AIRPORTS

**TORONTO—POLICY RESPECTING
LANDING RIGHTS**

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member for Sainte-Marie wish to ask a supplementary question?

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I raise a point of order concerning the press release issued by the Minister of Transport and entitled: "New policy considered for landing rights in Toronto".

I would like to ask the Minister of Transport whether the government has now taken up the practice of announcing its new policies through the press rather than making a statement in the house, which would enable hon. members to discuss the matter and to ask the minister for details?

[English]

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of Transport): I do not think this is a justifiable point of order, Mr. Speaker. The information which was released is really not new, in the sense that it has been talked about for weeks or months and has been a matter of controversy in the city of Toronto even longer than that.

A number of airlines have indicated they would like to have landing rights in Toronto as well as in Montreal. They asked in effect if the government of Canada would be willing to open negotiations with other countries to that end. The government of Canada has decided that we would be glad to negotiate with them, talk to them and if they have anything to offer Canada which is of equal value to landing rights in Toronto, then the bilaterals could be changed accordingly.

I think this is a routine matter, Mr. Speaker, and I am glad my hon. friend shows interest in it. I think it is recognized that Toronto, too, is an important city and there should be more than ample air traffic in the years ahead to provide all the business that both Montreal and Toronto can cope with.

Mr. Valade: I would like to ask a supplementary question. I ask the minister if landing permits are actually being considered for foreign airlines using the airport at Toronto?

Mr. Hellyer: As the release indicated, Mr. Speaker, all that can happen now is for negotiations to take place between any country interested in landing rights and the government of Canada to see whether there is a quid pro quo which would be of equivalent value. This does not guarantee that anyone will have that kind of value to offer, and it is a policy of entering negotiations. I hope there will be some fruitful conclusions. I am optimistic there will be, but certainly nothing is guaranteed until negotiations have taken place.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, arising from the press release put out by the minister's department yesterday concerning extended rights for the Toronto airport as an international gateway. May I ask the minister whether the government will pursue with greater vigour its efforts to get Winnipeg to the initial stage of being recognized as an international gateway?

Mr. Hellyer: We are exercising greater vigour in this direction. In particular, the Minister without Portfolio who is from Winnipeg, has shown a keen interest, as have other western members.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Can the Minister without Portfolio indicate what progress he is making?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[Translation]

Mr. Valade: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. From now on, does he intend to allow ministers to make statements about their administrative decisions to the press rather than in the House? Is it a new policy or must we expect that statements of his—