

When we realize that the province of Alberta is pouring billions of dollars of additional revenue into the federal treasury from the production of our natural resource, and no natural resource production from any other province in this Dominion has been taxed in the same manner and to this extent, it makes one realize why there is so much anti-federal government feeling growing up throughout the entire country.

The vast and unwise expenditures by the Ministry of Transport in such projects as Mirabel and the proposed new Toronto airport should be no justification for completely ignoring the legitimate and reasonable request and requirements of the capital of Alberta.

I wanted to share that letter with the House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if the hon. member would permit a question?

Mr. Roche: When I have finished my speech, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Stanfield: Stop terrorizing us, Otto.

Mr. Roche: Mr. Speaker, I turn from the primary question of structural enlargement of the Edmonton international airport in order to better serve the travelling public of western Canada. The second argument I wish to present to the House concerns the facilities for preclearance. That is a subject which has been repeatedly drawn to the attention of the minister and to that of his colleague, the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Guay). I wish to pay tribute to the former minister of national revenue, now Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin). In her capacity as minister of national revenue she made some marginal improvements in having overtime facilities provided for customs officials servicing Edmonton-bound passengers travelling back from pacific destinations. That is an improvement which I wish to acknowledge. I must add, parenthetically, that it was an improvement brought about as a result of a tremendous wave of pressure from the Edmonton travelling public.

● (1612)

Mr. Paproski: And from Edmonton members.

Mr. Roche: We now turn to the question of the preclearance facilities put in on a regular basis to serve passengers travelling to the United States who do not wish to be inconvenienced, especially now with the opening of the Calgary airport with preclearance facilities, by having to get off the plane in Alberta for preclearance, once having got on in Edmonton, and then going on to the United States. The argument that has been presented, namely, that structural changes in order to permit preclearance facilities put in at the Edmonton airport, demand a great expenditure of money, is one that is open to question.

I call as my witness in this question of how much needs to be spent in order to put in preclearance facilities, Mr. H. L. Morrison, consulting engineer, who has already written to the minister. I am not sure that the minister has had an opportunity to examine Mr. Morrison's argument, but I will reduce it to one or two sentences. Mr. Morrison is saying that smaller projects in the Edmonton airport could well be undertaken by the government, consistent with its general policy of expendi-

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ture restraint, to provide the kind of service that the travelling public has the right to expect. Mr. Morrison writes:

I simply cannot believe that preclearance service cannot be provided to everyone's satisfaction without a major modification to the terminal.

In other words, it would be possible and consistent with the government's restraint policies to honour its commitment for preclearance soon, and not repeat the argument that we cannot have preclearance in Edmonton until the restraint has been lifted and more money can be spent.

Mr. Paproski: Before the next election.

Mr. Roche: I believe we should take into consideration the 1974 bilateral agreement between Canada and the U.S. which provided for the establishment of preclearance facilities in Edmonton and in Calgary, and note that these facilities are not in place in the manner provided in the agreement.

Mr. John Barry, president of the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, pointed out as follows:

Passengers travelling to the United States from Edmonton and Calgary are severely inconvenienced by the lack of preclearance facilities.

My argument now is that if the permanent structural facilities cannot be installed, then consideration should be given to the installation of temporary preclearance facilities, in order that the public attending the Commonwealth Games in Edmonton in 1978 can be served more expeditiously, and the movement of traffic to the Edmonton airport expedited. My argument for an improvement soon at the international airport at Edmonton is not based only on the convenience of travellers. It is centred on the economic imperative—if the minister wishes to pursue this matter, I hope he will listen to my concluding argument as to why I am making this representation on behalf of the Edmonton airport—of improving transportation services as an essential component of development that will be of benefit to the entire west, and hence to Canada.

My approach is not chauvinistic, but national. If we are to save Canada in a renewed confederation, there must be stronger regional development, and this cannot be done, in such a far-flung country as ours, without better transportation facilities. Improvements at the Edmonton international airport are part of the institutional changes that will accommodate this new economic era for Canada, led by the west. I would, therefore, like to suggest in conclusion that proposals to improve Air Canada should include not only reorganization, which we have been discussing in our debate on this bill, but consideration of the physical needs of air travellers and the role that Air Canada can play in keeping Canada together.

Finally, if we must avoid a commitment to large expenditures now, then I suggest that certain structural changes at the Edmonton airport, and the immediate implementation of preclearance facilities, can be done with expenditures that are consistent with restraint in the government and will also be of service to the travelling public in the manner I have described.

Mr. Lang: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I understood the hon. member was willing to answer a question. I refer back to the point at which I wanted to ask the question.