

We also have concerns when we think of the need for some regulation in the system to ensure that parts of Canada are well served. I remind the House of the 1897 Crow's Nest Pass agreement, which was designed to help western producers; of the statutory grain rates established in the 1920s, again to assist western farmers; of the Western Grain Transportation Act, which was necessary to provide equal opportunities for those in western Canada; and of the Maritime Assistance Act as well as the Atlantic Provinces Freight Assistance Act, which were designed to provide equal opportunities for people in the Atlantic provinces. These pieces of legislation were thoughtfully presented, argued, and adopted in the past because they were deemed to be absolutely necessary. Suddenly, through this intellectual breakthrough, the Conservatives think that they are unnecessary and that we can throw aside all this legislation and let the free hand of the market-place decide.

In closing, when people are seeking lower air fares, they want to go between other places than Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. What about Red Deer, Swift Current, Moncton, Sherbrooke, and Brantford? If it is to be simply the invisible hand of the market-place which decides where services will be provided at competitive rates, it will just be between major metropolitan areas in terms of air fares. Those living in smaller cities and towns in rural areas will once again experience discrimination at the hands of the Government.

Mr. Moe Mantha (Nipissing): Mr. Speaker, I just want to draw to the attention of the House the problem with which I was left when I was elected in 1984. As a result of deregulation under two former Ministers of the Liberal Government, 23 controllers at the air terminal in North Bay were to be uprooted through attrition, or moved to Toronto or Winnipeg. They had mortgages. Their children went to school in the North Bay area. They were totally upset.

I draw to the attention of the House that this problem was started by the former Government under deregulation, and today Liberal Members talk about being against deregulation. It is hard to believe what you hear as a new Member of Parliament. The former Government has left the present Government with this problem. I hope we will be able to do something good and that these controllers will not have to move.

● (1150)

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to rise again in the discussion of Bill C-18, because it allows me to dwell a little longer on this party's position on such a basic matter.

Although unbelievably thick, this Bill as it now stands is more amazing because of its shortcomings than because of what it does contain.

Two weeks ago, I rose for the first time in the early stages of the debate on second Reading, and I pointed out to the House

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that we in the Liberal Party believe this legislation is incomplete. The deregulation principle itself is acceptable, but the way they are going about it is totally unacceptable in our view. For this reason during discussion in committee we will attempt to bring in amendments to provide safety guarantees to certain groups in our society who may be harmed by the Bill as it is now drafted, because we believe specifically that safety at airports is essential, and the Bill does not guarantee the safety of each and every passenger boarding a plane. Despite all this Government's rhetoric, it is clear the Bill has no teeth as far as air safety is concerned, and the same even applies with respect to rail safety, for we must admit there is now a significant increase in the number of rail accidents in Canada. The only thing the Government has been able to do so far is to appoint inquiry commissions which invariably urge the Government to intervene and impose much stricter conditions and a much more appropriate control system. Yet this Bill does not even allude to safety measures.

We would also suggest that the Bill is replete with other flaws. Particularly with respect to air rates, we can see now that one of the priorities advocated by the Deputy Prime Minister and Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) who was then the Minister of Transport and sponsor of the first Conservative Bill on deregulation can be summed up in his words: Thanks to deregulation we will see the rates decline. The fact is that the rates of our Canadian air carriers will not go down as a result of deregulation or this Government measure. There could have been competition in the air, but any such possibility is melting away like snow under the sun. All major air carriers are buying each other out and before too long there will be undue concentration in Canada's air transport business. So how can anyone possibly look forward to healthy competition among various companies when in fact Canada will end up with only one or maybe two major air carriers?

As if the situation were not devastating enough, both CP Air and Air Canada presidents stated before the parliamentary committee which studied the Minister's document entitled *Freedom to Move* that they did not expect to see lower air rates within the next few years. Why? Because the two presidents told us that indeed, owing to market forces and especially competition from foreign airlines—mostly American airlines—Canada's major carriers are feeling the pinch and simply cannot offer lower rates to their clients.

In short, I believe that the Canadian consumers have been deceived because the Minister of Transport (Mr. Crosbie) has tried to make the public believe that the rates will decrease substantially because of deregulation. The former Minister of Transport, who is the sponsor of this Bill, was himself forced to admit the truth last June when he appeared before the Committee and was asked for evidence that rates would in fact decrease. He was himself forced to admit that there was no guarantee that his deregulation plan would result in a rate decrease. What is even worse in my opinion is the effect that this Bill will have on employment in the transport sector. The