

Therefore, the member's argument that safety is better because there are more planes in the sky and more hours does not hold water. The agency's own reports show that there has been an increase, not just in the straight number of accidents, but in the rate of per 100,000 hours. It is going up, not down.

My question to the member is: Why does the government continue to insist on mixing apples and oranges in this debate instead of being honest with the Canadian public and saying the accident rate has gone up and it is going to do something to bring it back down?

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, we could keep going around this. The facts are clear. The member stated in his somewhat lengthy preamble to his question that our numbers were accurate. That is on the record as just now admitted by the member. Our numbers, the numbers of the Minister of Transport and the Department of Transport are accurate. There has been no increase in the rate of accidents in this country. He is referring specifically to air safety here.

I would like to repeat that we have just completed a three-year inquiry into a particular crash. The Moshansky report has recently been tabled and I think the member is aware that just this past week Mr. Justice Moshansky, who completed this very detailed report and assessment, indicated that Canada has one of the safest aviation systems in the world. That speaks for itself.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I again restate that it is privilege for me to rise and debate this opposition motion regarding the deregulation of our transportation industry.

For the record, let me restate what that motion is.

That this House condemns the government for its unwillingness to concede that the deregulation of the Canadian transport industry has been a failure and in fact has led to fewer carriers, fewer jobs, higher prices, reduced service and less safe operations in air, road and rail transportation.

The thrust of this motion is correct. However, I would like to state one important caveat with respect to the intention of this motion. What it states regarding higher prices and job losses is true. Of paramount importance, however, is the government's complete failure to be prepared to deal with the creature it unleashed. There are literally volumes of documentation rife with examples of this government's failure to deal with deregulation.

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I would like to set out other problems in Transport Canada which, as far as we on this side of the House are concerned, have barred real attempts at reform within the transportation system.

Transport Canada has become a revolving door of ministerial irresponsibility. On the one hand, ministers are replaced at the drop of a hat when cabinet shuffles are completed. This fact severely mitigates any changes to the system which might have been under way as the minister became more familiar with the department.

I have that kind of knowledge first hand from one of the previous five Ministers of Transport that this government has had in office. In fairness I am not going to state who that is. I am not going to say who it is by name, but he knows who it is. He was the one who told me at a dinner one night when we got together with other members of the transport committee. He said to me: "Damn, I was just getting my teeth into this thing. I was just starting to understand that massive portfolio called Transport Canada and now I have to be moved off to another minister's portfolio". That is indeed unfortunate.

On the other hand, successive managers, and we are talking foot soldiers, senior managers and the minister, brought in from the outside have made their mark in the department and then have moved on, of course merely compounding the phenomenon of the revolving door which I just spoke about.

The problem is that ministers and managers trying to make the right career moves did not implement policies which would probably have increased the department's spending. Remember that this is a government that, from the very beginning, made deficit reduction its over-all policy objective.

When deregulation was proposed by this government, its belief was that the industry, air and road, would blossom on its own. It believed—and we have heard it from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport—in that Conservative credo of survival of the fittest and took the reins of the marketplace so that the industry could grow without undue government regulation and supervision. But the government failed to tend to the roots of that system. We know full well that when something has to grow, one has to put in the support mechanisms and the resources that will ensure the steady, strong and vertical or upward growth of that system, but not this government.