

Air Canada

adequate hearing. Surely, as a minimum, adequate provisions for review should be established in the event an acquisition takes place or a new enterprise is established.

Short of an outright prohibition against the purchase of shares or other interests in for-hire trucking undertakings, I believe governor in council sanctions should not be exercised unless or until interested parties have been given notice and have had the opportunity to comment to the Minister of Transport. The minister will turn around and say that this still has to be approved by provincial regulatory bodies. I say that before any government orders in council approve the acquisition of or the establishment of a for-hire trucking enterprise, adequate notice should be given to the industry, because to allow this to lay in the hands of provincial regulatory bodies is not sufficient, and there would not be sufficient time, in many cases, for the trucking industry adequately to prepare and study all the consequences and implications of a move such as that.

To my mind, inclusion of such a provision would not create a hardship since, pursuant to section 27 of the National Transportation Act and provincial highway transport board requirements dealing with mergers and acquisitions, Air Canada would have to give notice of acquisition for the purpose of allowing interested parties to object before the various regulatory tribunals. The difference is—and I repeat this—that governor in council approval is how the issue is usually resolved.

Past experience reveals that, pursuant to section 27 of the National Transportation Act, when orders in council are given it is assumed that approval becomes a *fait accompli*, and to a large extent the provincial boards abdicate their review responsibility. I would hope the minister would seriously consider motion No. 1. I know he will say to the House that there are sufficient assurances and guarantees to allay the fears I have been expressing.

● (1240)

I respectfully submit that the close examination I have given this legislation, and the examination that has been so thoroughly conducted by the Canadian Trucking Association, show that there is not sufficient protection in the bill to assure the truckers of a fair chance to engage in dialogue with the minister before any acquisition is made or a trucking enterprise is created under the aegis of Air Canada.

I should like now to deal briefly with motion No. 2 which has the effect of striking out the following:

The governor in council may, by order, authorize the corporation to engage in or carry on any activities not otherwise authorized by this act.

I propose this simply because of the fears I have of Air Canada engaging in this extra-trucking activity. As I said earlier, its capacities and activities have been broadened extensively. Excessive powers have been granted over the activities and capacities as outlined in clause 6(1)(d) and (i), and we have further order in council powers authorized under clause 8.

[Mr. Mazankowski.]

The minister indicated in committee that he sees this particular provision being used only in extraordinary circumstances, so I certainly do not see any reason for leaving it in the act. I do not think Air Canada needs any more power, whether it is directly contained in the act or granted to it by order in council. If we are to go beyond the powers enshrined in this legislation, it is certainly a matter that should be referred to parliament. When you combine the thrust of this legislation with the thrust of the new National Transportation Act, it provides greater power to the government to dictate and manage the transportation industry of this country. We do not need this sort of ad hoc direction. We need some clearly defined policies and limitations, because we will soon be seeking huge investments in the transportation industry. What we need is continuity of policy and not the day-to-day intervention of the government.

I would hope that through the hearings on the National Transportation Act we will be able to define a realistic national transportation policy with minimal government intervention and will be able to allow the trucking enterprises to strike out on their own and do a job consistent with the delineation of a national transportation policy and with a minimum of ministerial interference. If we can do that, we will avoid the kind of ad hocery that is bound to come with a change of minister. I think it is fair to say that this minister has brought greater stability to the transportation industry than there was in the past. I commend him for that. We do not always agree with his policies, but I think we were successful in getting a clearer definition of the mandate and mission of Air Canada. I think our feelings generally correspond with the minister's feelings in that area.

I hope the minister will seriously reconsider motion No. 1, as I do not think it will hurt or impede the operations of Air Canada. If it were accepted, I would be happy to withdraw the other two motions standing in my name. There may be one or two speakers on our side who wish to engage in this debate, Mr. Speaker, so I will just call upon the minister to consider my motion seriously. It is an important motion, and would serve to dispel the fears of the trucking industry and create a better mood of confidence, stability and continuity which is what we really need at this time when we are engaged in a huge investment in the transportation infrastructure. It is something that will come about not only through the private sector but through the involvement of public funds.

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the objectives of the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) in bringing forward these amendments. We have discussed them in committee, but I know that one of his purposes—and I assure him that I share it—is to allay the fears of interested parties concerning what may happen with this bill. I believe that in committee I gave those assurances, but I will repeat them here. In putting the new structure of Air Canada before the House, we could have gone to the Canadian Business Corporation and given it all the powers of a natural person in relation to its activities. That would have been seen by some as giving the corporation and management of the