

and determined that we are going to have a national transportation system.

The member also asked me about the Halifax maintenance yard. I can only reiterate what the minister said in reply to either his question or one of the members opposite who asked about that. The Halifax maintenance centre will stay.

If he were to come out to Vancouver or out to British Columbia where they were used to having the two trains, the Supercontinental and The Canadian, go through he would see they are now down to three trains per week. When you look at the Halifax to Montreal route, you see it still has six trains per week. It still has them on both lines, the north and the south line.

I think the Atlantic has been well served in that respect with the connections to central Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Comments are now terminated. I have three more speakers before four o'clock. I would recognize the hon. member for Hillsborough. Then I will recognize the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan. I will wind up with the hon. member for St. Boniface.

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Dartmouth has certainly put forward the concerns of Atlantic Canada. With the exception that I would like to speak on this motion, there would not be much need of me going any further.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, in support of the motion put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbes—Baie Verte. The motion calls for this House to approve the recommendations contained in the second report of the Standing Committee on Transport. Specifically the standing committee calls for a moratorium on the government's proposed cuts to VIA Rail.

It is a well-known fact that the drastic cuts to our national rail system will impact on every individual across Canada. The government states that it can no longer afford to maintain a rail service that only 3 per cent of Canadians use. What Canadians are not told is that this figure includes the regions where VIA does not operate. If we use these measures then only 6 per cent of Canadians ride buses and only 6 per cent use airplanes.

Supply

We listened to statements by the Minister of Transport like: "We have to consider that Canadians seem to stick to roads and air". What he does not say is that trains are being rediscovered in North America. Ridership increased on VIA by 10 per cent system-wide last year and in the first five months of this year showed a further increase.

According to Andrew Roman, the renowned author of a study in air deregulation, "Air fares will increase 30 per cent in the next year or two. There are going to be more people returning to passenger rail, only to find that none exists".

The minister has also stated: "Canada has to deal first of all with those modes of transportation which have to be considered as the future of transportation in Canada".

Mr. Kenneth Hare, chairman of the Climate Planning Board, cautions: "Transport policy has a profound effect on environmental issues—Getting cars and trucks off the road is a major environmental objective". He goes on to state that he personally regarded the government's plan of reducing train service as a serious mistake from an environmental point of view. I believe it is time that this government provided some far-sighted leadership by encouraging the use of an environmentally sound transportation alternative.

Thus, the standing committee's recommendation that calls upon the government to direct the royal commission to give particular attention to among other other issues over-all environmental impacts.

The VIA cuts will impact on every passenger in this country, especially the handicapped, those of lower income and those living in rural areas with poor highway systems. The Atlantic region will once again bear more than its share of the burden. Atlantic Canada will lose 68 of its 80 runs. That amounts to 85 per cent of all Atlantic train service.

My province of Prince Edward Island has been without train service for years. Our only link to the mainland passenger train service was a bus system which this government has to no one's surprise eliminated. Islanders do not have access to what the minister and the Prime Minister call a national rail system.

Last month when I asked the minister if he would restore our bus service he said: "No". He also stated that we have a ferry service that will serve as our link to the