

Air Canada

is exactly what is happening. The Government does not want public scrutiny of this privatization. That is the reason why it is pushing the Bill through so quickly. That is the reason why it only allowed one day of hearings, without opportunity for the people in the regions to be heard. Air Canada has not only been a service; it has been a builder of Canada. It has had a binding effect and it has been a source of bilingualism in Canada. It has been in existence for 51 years.

● (1140)

[Translation]

It was a reason and a force for bilingualism in Canada. Now bilingualism is no different from any other subject, and it is not very important to this Government.

It is incredible! But thinking about public issues, about the needs of the public, about the future of bilingualism, is not very important to this Government.

[English]

The privatization of Air Canada is giving us a tremendous insight into this Government. Along that same vein, the Government does not want Air Canada to be a window on the commercial airline practices of this country. The Government says it knows what is going on in the airline industry because it has a Crown corporation that is a player. The Government says: "Let's get rid of it and turn it over to the private sector. The people of Canada have no reason to know about what is going on in the airline industry in Canada or internationally."

What about prices, Mr. Speaker? We have been told by the Government that prices will go down with privatization. We were told that airline fares would go down with deregulation. Prices are not going down in the United States. They are going down on some select sexy routes people may want to take for winter vacations or routes between certain large cities. You see the rates advertised in the various newspapers and magazines. But if you ask people in the smaller towns and smaller cities, they tell you prices are going up because there is no regulation on what airlines can do or charge. If one company raises prices, you will certainly not get a reduction in price by another airline, Mr. Speaker. You will most probably get an increase and maybe competing airlines will hold on to the prices they had before. When one airline increases its prices, they all increase their prices. That is the way things have worked. We saw that happen at the gasoline pumps and with drug prices. There is no reason to think that this sort of thing will not happen with airline fares.

I would like to speak about some of the witnesses who came before our committee, particularly the unions who I thought gave excellent testimony. They were very sincere and pointed out an awful lot about the inside workings of Air Canada and the airline industry about which the people of Canada have a right to know. I am referring to the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers who complained, as did all unions, about the way the Government was rushing this Bill through committee without adequate debate and the hearing

of sufficient witnesses. That was a position taken by all unions which appeared before the committee. With respect to the Canadian Union of Public Employees, CUPE, it said:

New owners can contract out the work to foreign nationals possibly creating a lay-off situation. Air Canada threatened this in 1985 but backed off under political pressure. Once privatized, they will try again.

That is the word before a committee of a very important and significant union in this country which obviously knows what Air Canada tried to do in 1985. Although we were told that contracting out is not being contemplated, the union knows that contracting out was contemplated. CUPE is concerned not only about jobs but the level of service.

Air Canada wants more international routes—

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. At this time I would like to give the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys (Mr. MacLellan) an opportunity to make a correction to something he said in his speech. I heard the Hon. Member say that he had questioned as many people as possible during the committee hearing. I was a member of the committee and I am sure the Hon. Member will recall that when the Air Canada Employees Ownership Committee appeared before us the Hon. Member refused to question its witnesses. That is on the record of the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That is not a point of order.

Mr. Orlikow: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): If the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North is going to elaborate on the same statement, it will not be a point of order either. It is debate. But I will listen to the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, as you have already pointed out the Member's intervention was not a point of order. The Member will remember that I did question that so-called committee and it had very few answers about its membership, its constitution—

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, I made reference only to the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys has the floor.

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Speaker, I do not recall having said what has been attributed to me by the Hon. Member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception (Mr. Johnson) because we could not have possibly questioned all the witnesses, so few came before the committee on that one day that we were allowed to hear witnesses. I will certainly mention the group to which the Hon. Member referred. I have not left that out by any means. I am coming to that and I will be doing it very shortly.

Mr. Orlikow: A group of phoneyes.