

National Transportation Act, 1986

simply assume that it was an inadvertent falsehood stated by the Hon. Member in the House at the time.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) rises on a matter of debate. I would imagine it is an argument over something raised in a question by the Hon. Member toward the end of Question Period today. I think I should indicate to the Hon. House Leader for the New Democratic Party, the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis), that, generally, with the consent of the Opposition, the Chair is prepared to hear Hon. Members from the government side. The Chair would expect and prefer, and I think all Hon. Members would also, when the Chair recognizes someone from the government side, a legitimate question to be raised and not a statement of fact thrown into the debate. I know all Hon. Members would think that this is the appropriate way for the Chair to view these questions. I hope the Hon. Member will accept the Chair's statement that I am determined, as much as I possibly can, to maintain that approach. As I said, sometimes the Chair cannot always predict what the question will be.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION ACT, 1986

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Crosbie that Bill C-18, an Act respecting national transportation, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee, and the amendment of Mr. Benjamin (p. 2756).

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, let me at the outset express my disappointment that the Hon. Member for Nunatsiak (Mr. Suluk) will not continue his discourse of this morning. For my part, and I am sure I am speaking also for all members of our caucus, I consider it to have been a very significant exposition of the character of the North, far beyond the mere issue of transportation.

The Hon. Member talked about how difficult it might be for southerners to live during the winter in the North under circumstances of perpetual darkness. I must say that this must be an experience in a political winter which his Party shares. Perhaps some light was shed upon the Hon. Member's Party, as it was shed upon all of us, with respect to the particular and unique problems of the North. I would like to note, for example, that the North is a part of Canada which bears the same characteristics as the rest of our country at the time it was decided that in order to ensure that, for the sake of east-west communication for the development of this country, there needed to be a transportation system. That transportation system necessitated regulations to ensure that all parts of the country were equally served. What the Hon. Member said was certainly consistent with the need for continued regulation in

order to ensure that the public need and convenience of those in the North is indeed served.

Parenthetically, during his discourse, the Hon. Member, I thought, made the imaginative proposal that the character of the North demands a different kind of transportation. He alluded to the need and, indeed, the appropriateness of industry in the South committing itself to some degree to research which would be directed to appropriate forms of transportation in the North. I hope the Hon. Member's Government was listening carefully to this very strong protest in favour of expanded research to meet Canadian needs.

I stand before you, Mr. Speaker, willingly admitting that I, like very many Canadians, do not quite understand this huge piece of legislation in all of its ramifications. The system with which it deals is complex. Beyond all things, it is necessary that the Canadian people have an opportunity to understand the legislation. I think it is most unfortunate that the opportunity in the form of authority to travel for the committee, which would have given the Canadian people an opportunity to understand this legislation, has been denied.

It seems to me to be hurried legislation, legislation that is being rushed through. Perhaps a partial explanation for the rush in getting this legislation through, the reason for refusing the committee an opportunity for adequate consideration, is that the Government does not want the public to understand what it is doing. That is difficult to understand because it claims it is acting in the best interests of Canadians. Surely, a part of acting in the best interest of Canadians is to keep the promises made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) to ensure that on every subject on which the Government acts there will be adequate consultation.

When one considers those facts, one wonders whether this is a Bill introduced for the purposes of serving the needs, aspirations and concerns of Canadians or whether it was introduced on the basis of some ideological agenda. We have identified that ideological agenda and it consists of a troika: free trade, deregulation and privatization. On the surface, I think these things are all understood. However, when one considers the pattern of action of the Government, it may very well be that the most fundamental ideology of the Government is Americanization. Without adequate arguments for what is being done, one must look for some model which is being emulated by the Government. Surely, it is clear that what we are doing once more, instead of finding our own way, is to emulate the Americans.

I do not stand before you, Mr. Speaker, to suggest in any way that regulatory reform is not necessary. Like all Canadians, I have had from time to time experiences with our transportation system which I found objectionable. I have seen effects of regulation which I think ought to be changed. I have seen evidence of implementation of regulations which suggests a degree of archaism. We are not suggesting there should be no change. However, we must be concerned about the nature of the change which is occurring, the motivation for those changes and what will be the implications.