

or area of the country at their own will then there is not the stability of transportation service which is so essential to regional and economic development. If they are allowed to vacate an area, such as Atlantic Canada, because there is not enough traffic to make their existence viable, then the region will never become economically viable. Development will never take place because there will not be the transportation necessary to move the products, whether they be agricultural, manufactured or raw materials. There would be an insufficient capacity to grow. That is why regional and economic development have to take priority over economic viability of transporters.

The Government's blind adherence to the so-called deregulation of transportation in the name of competition and market forces automatically places regions such as Atlantic Canada, northern Ontario and the far north at a disadvantage. It stacks the deck against their obtaining more regional and economic development. If transportation services are not in place, and transportation is the basic foundation of any economy, then allowing the transporters to pick and choose where they want to work, allowing them to go into the nice markets and cream the gravy off the top, going home to count their money and saying to hell with the rest of the country, cannot take place. That is why public convenience and necessity must remain.

However, we are only going to be allowed to keep those in the designated area. That is why this amendment which is before us is worthy of support. It places that type of priority in the new law so that this Government, or any succeeding Government, will always have to arrange that our efficient transportation system provides the type of service required for a region to grow and for job creation.

If we are totally to disregard, as the Government presently does, the principle of cross-subsidization, then those types of areas are left even further in the hole. Their capacity to grow is lessened even more. Cross-subsidization is a principle which I consider part of what we call co-operative federalism. That is to say that the nation as a whole shares in the cost of providing transportation services. In this way we minimize discrimination against people and the goods they produce because of where they happen to be located. If there are big profits to be made in the dense markets of Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton or Winnipeg, then fine. Some of those profits should go toward the provision of services in places such as Atlantic Canada and northern Ontario. That is fair. It means that all Canadians through the tax system, through the fares they pay and the rates they are charged, share together the cost of serving people all over the country, not just where a buck can be made. That has been an underlying principle in transportation since 1881.

The legislators of those days were more far-sighted than even they knew. We now have before us a short-sighted, self-defeating type of legislation that would eliminate what has been an absolute necessity in Canada for the past 100 some years. In fact, that necessity remains today. In some parts of

the country it is even more needed than it was in the late 1800s or even in the Dirty Thirties.

I wish to commend the motion of the Hon. Member to the House. I commend him for moving it. I hope that the Government will decide that this is one that is worthy of acceptance and allow it to be incorporated into the legislation.

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, I rise in this debate in order to commend my colleague for Westmorland—Kent (Mr. Robichaud) for bringing in this amendment that responds to representations made to the Standing Committee on Transport when on two occasions we travelled, especially in the Atlantic Provinces, both for the review of the Government document *Freedom to Move* and on the occasion of the second series of public hearings in the Maritimes, when the Transport Committee discussed Bill C-18. On each of those occasions, concerns of Maritime people for regional development were expressed in an absolutely clear, specific and undeniable way.

It is therefore amazing that did not get through to the Government. Certainly the Bill now before us does not meet the aspirations of the people in the Maritimes.

For those reasons, the Hon. Member for Westmorland—Kent is bringing forward an amendment that would clearly specify that, where regional development objectives conflict with the objectives of commercial viability, the former would take precedence.

Obviously, transportation in Canada is absolutely vital to the economic welfare of all regions of the country. We cannot imagine such a large country as ours without a transportation system that is adequate to meet the needs of the people, not only for the transportation of passengers from one region to the other, but especially for moving all the necessities of life that must be delivered to the people living in the remotest areas.

Transportation therefore is vital for the Maritimes economy. I cannot understand why the Minister did not respond to the clear and specific representations that were made by his Conservative colleagues with provincial responsibilities.

The Government of Nova Scotia, the Government of New Brunswick and the Government of Newfoundland, three Conservative Governments, made specific representations to the current Minister of Transport (Mr. Crosbie), who turned them down.

● (1230)

[English]

Therefore, my colleague, the Hon. Member for Westmorland—Kent (Mr. Robichaud), is quite right to move this amendment. In doing so, he is speaking not only on his own behalf but on behalf of all the people of the four maritime regions. The Province of Nova Scotia appeared before our committee. It presented a brief to us which stated in part: