

*National Transportation Act, 1986*

in a sense provided the framework that we have known in Canada for the last two decades. We all recognize that it is time for rethinking, upgrading, and re-examining the various sectors of that Act, and bringing it more in line with the realities of the 1980s in preparation for the 1990s.

This Bill could be called Bill C-18 with a variety of things in terms of title. It does have a title, but I would think that a more appropriate title would be to call this an anti-bill. It is in fact anti-competition. It is anti-regional. It is anti-economic development, particularly in certain regions of Canada. It is anti-Canadian. It is anti-safety. It is anti-service. It is anti-small-business. I could go on with a variety of other categories.

In looking at what this Bill actually does as opposed to the mythology surrounding it, it is quite alarming. In this Bill there is the assumption that we will leave the transportation systems of Canada to the free hand of the market-place. The belief that whatever is the most profitable thing to do is what companies should be permitted to do, and that what makes sense in terms of profit motive is good for Canada goes against the reality of the Canadian landscape. If we say that what is profitable is best, once again the entire emphasis of the transportation system will be focused on the Golden Horseshoe region of southern Ontario or the Toronto-Montreal access. That will be Canada, that is where the transportation system will be most effective and efficient. The rest of Canada will simply be left on the sidelines. That is not what built Canada. That is not what makes Canada today. That is one of the major weaknesses in this piece of legislation. It lacks any framework by which to evaluate the various aspects of the Bill.

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What does it do in terms of dealing with matters of safety for workers and passengers? What does it do to create better and improved competition in our economy? What does it do in terms of developing economic growth, particularly in the regions of Canada? Does it assist the fledgling small business sector or small manufacturers, particularly in our regions? Does it promote Canadian participation in the economy? I am afraid that the answer to all these questions is no, it does not.

Consequently, we have a number of concerns regarding Bill C-18. I think it is really a carbon copy of Bill C-126. The old Bill has been simply reintroduced in the House. When the Minister of Transport (Mr. Crosbie) introduced the Bill, he was asked in a scrum outside the House, "How is Bill C-18 different from Bill C-126?" He had to admit that he was not aware of any significant changes. He was not aware that it was much different at all.

We know what groups felt about the previous Bill to deregulate the transportation system. We know that the Canadian Trucking Association was against the previous legislation. We know that CN was against the legislation. We know that CP was against the legislation. We know that the Council of Maritime Premiers was against the legislation. We know that the Canadian Labour Congress was against the legislation. Quite frankly the list goes on for a whole page.

Witness after witness appeared to speak against the legislation in terms of it being anti-competitive and anti-service. They indicated that it did not promote safety for passengers or for people working in the transportation system and that it did not enhance Canadian participation.

Quite frankly the question is, who supports the Bill? I suppose a few major shipping companies support it. However, do Canadian consumers support it? I, for one, will be very curious to see who lines up during the committee hearings, which will hopefully be held across Canada, to say that this is good legislation.

I should like to refer to a specific point in the legislation. The authors of Bill C-18 seem to understand the devastating impact of deregulation on the northern parts of Canada. Perhaps one should ask, do they really understand? The Bill retains regulation for air travel only for an area called the designated area. In other words, the Bill indicates that it is important to have regulation in a certain part of Canada, that being the northern part of the country. I should say that it is defined as being north of the line drawn from the 50th parallel on the East Coast to the 55th parallel on the West Coast. In this particular area regulation will continue, except for flights from the south to northern destinations as well as trips originating in the North and terminating in the South. These flights are still deregulated.

If it was believed that it was important to maintain regulation in the northern parts of Canada, which includes the northern parts of most provinces and certainly the territories, why was it restricted only to air travel? What about truck and marine traffic in those areas? If it is needed in the northern parts of Canada, what about the other parts of Canada?

In this particular section of Bill C-18 the Government really betrays the reality of the situation. It recognizes how important it is to ensure the economic development of northern Canada and to ensure that the citizens of that part of Canada obtain reasonably competitive rates. Also it recognizes that safety is a factor for workers and for passengers and that it is important to help Canadian companies exist in that milieu. Obviously it felt that regulation was necessary in that part of Canada. However, for the rest of Canada it says no. We will have to explore that distinction as the debate continues.

It is part of the sell-out theme for which the Government has become famous. It sold out the softwood industry. It sold out to multinational drug companies. It sold out the fishing industry. Now it is selling out in the transportation industry. It is part of the so-called free trade discussions which are already well under way. Bill C-18 is simply part of that because it will give United States railways and trucking companies access and advantage in Canada which Canadians will not have in the United States. It gives it all to the American trucking companies and to the American railways, but it does not give the same benefits to Canadian trucking companies and railways. Why would anyone agree with that? That is what the legislation does. It is pro-American and anti-Canadian. For that reason we have some real concerns about it.