

*National Transportation Act, 1986*

**Mr. Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if the Hon. Member for St. Catharines (Mr. Reid) could elaborate on why he has so much confidence in what will replace the Canadian Transport Commission. It seems to me that the Canadian Transport Commission has operated well over the years. It is not that we have not had our complaints with it from time to time, we have. However, I wonder if the Hon. Member can explain what he means by the ombudsman function of the new agency that is to replace the CTC. It seems to me that one of the features of bureaucracies with an ombudsman function, as opposed to a regulatory function, is that matters often take a very long time to be decided upon, whereas the Canadian Transport Commission now, particularly when it receives complaints related to safety or other operational concerns, has the power to act rather swiftly. Any experience I have had with ombudspersons tells me that will not be the case with that type of function. I would like to hear more from the Hon. Member with respect to why he thinks it is such a great thing. Why does he want to replace a regulatory commission that has a good record with a bureaucracy in which we have no reason to have very much confidence?

**Mr. Reid:** Mr. Speaker, the type of commission to which the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) refers, the Canadian Transport Commission, is just the type of regulatory commission that takes days on end to resolve an issue. He says that has also been his experience with respect to ombudsmen. I wish to point out to the Hon. Member that he should not be afraid to take a chance. As Samuel Johnson has said, "Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must be first overcome".

I wish to tell the Hon. Member that the streamlining of the new agency will make it accessible to the people involved in transportation. It will make it possible for them to reach early decisions. When we talk about an ombudsman role we are talking about a commission that is prepared to hear complaints, problems relating to rates and entry into markets. For far too long my friend has been dealing with the old types of commissions and the old types of ombudsmen's offices. I suggest he wait to try the new one.

**Mr. Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, I think we will find, if this Bill is passed and if it becomes law as it is now proposed, God forbid, that many of the people who formerly had complaints about the Canadian Transport Commission and the existing regulatory process will be wishing it back. They will be wishing it back after they have been subjected to the type of process that the Hon. Member has in mind, because that process will be much more subject to the political whims of the day than the process we have in place today.

An area upon which the Hon. Member did not go into great detail, and upon which I would like to know his position, is with respect to whether or not he is supportive of that element of the legislation that calls for mandated joint line rates which will put American railways directly in competition with Canadian railways. Is the Hon. Member aware of the concern

expressed by both Canadian National and Canadian Pacific, and everyone else in the railway community, that this could lead to the demise of our railway transportation system? Has the Hon. Member considered that point? If he has what is his position on it?

**Mr. Reid:** Mr. Speaker, the suggestion made by the Hon. Member is that if we follow the route of Bill C-18 the railways in Canada will reach their ultimate demise. I think that is a completely wrong premise. Frankly, what we want to do is make use of the joint resources of both railways on the northern portion of the North American continent. Given the resources of CN and CP we should be able to come up with a railway mode of transportation as effective, as efficient, as reliable and as responsible as that of the Burlington line south of the border. Obviously, with an intermodal form of transportation capable of fixing rates and linking trucking aspects of transportation with the destinations of railway lines we should be able to put in place a transportation system with both modes of transportation in operation. This will give a complete service to shippers, as well as providing efficient pricing. In this way we can compete completely with the Burlington line across the river. I would support that aspect, even if it comes to an agency consideration of a dispute.

• (1310)

**Mr. Gauthier:** I think the Hon. Member will agree with me that deregulation does seriously impact on existing carriers and on new carriers. It has created stressful situations in some employee-employer relations, and some concessions are demanded from the personnel of these large carriers. For example, I am thinking of the airline industry where we know that stressful jobs, often insecure positions, lay-offs, and longer hours of work cause human error.

Earlier in my remarks I was referring to the safety angle. First, would the Hon. Member tell me what he thinks about the employer-employee relations? At no place in this Bill are there questions of improving employee-employer relations. Does he agree that we should be concerned and preoccupied with putting something into this Bill which would indicate our will, as the Parliament of Canada, to protect and secure employment for those who may be touched by deregulation? Does the Hon. Member agree with me that there could be some severe or serious security factors involved in this rapid deregulation?

**Mr. Reid:** I thank the Hon. Member for his question which gives me an opportunity to emphasize that safety is a priority not to be compromised under this Bill or by the Government. We have said that over and over again. One of the reasons that the agency is established is for the specific purpose of monitoring the operation of these different modes of transport from the point of view of safety, security, and the environment. The agency is not there to protect each private mode of transport, or even the public mode of transport from an employer-employee relation. We want to rid ourselves of this type of