

Canada. If we keep on taking this particular track, we will eventually isolate the remote areas of Canada and we will not have the kind of country that you and I, Mr. Speaker, and most Members of the House feel is the country we have been promoting for so long.

I would like to remind Conservative Members that if we are to work as a nation, if we are to have the kind of nation that we think we should have, a united and forceful nation, we must have a transportation policy which unites the country and allows all areas of Canada to operate without discrimination. This Bill does not allow for that.

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Carlo Rossi (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take part in the debate on Bill C-18 and to detail further our party's position on this fundamental question.

Although outwardly the Bill impresses by its bulk, we are more impressed by what it does not than by what it does contain.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is incomplete. We have already said it is utterly lacking in credible safety guarantees. We have also referred to the lack of restrictions on foreign control of our transportation industry, in the case of the trucking sector. This is a real problem and a pressing one, but unfortunately, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Crosbie) has chosen to ignore the problem.

Mr. Speaker, we have also pointed to the lack of guarantees for job security. Thousands of Canadian workers are afraid to lose their jobs, and once again, the Minister and the Government have turned a deaf ear. For these reasons alone, this flagrant lack of judgment and sensitivity, the Bill would be a bad Bill and should be rewritten, but there is worse than that, Mr. Speaker. When the Minister of Transport tabled this Bill with its far-reaching reform of our regulatory framework, he failed to consider the humanitarian aspect and include special provisions for the rights of the handicapped.

Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Mount Royal (Mrs. Finestone) raised the issue in the House last Friday. Do you know what the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Kilgour) had to say? That the National Transportation Act will be subject to human rights legislation. Mr. Speaker, that is wishful thinking. This so-called comprehensive reform of the regulatory framework would have been a unique opportunity for any Government with real concern for the rights of the handicapped to enshrine in our transportation legislation provisions governing access, comfort, safety and fare schedules for the handicapped on all transport modes.

Mr. Speaker, above all, the Bill contains no imperative standards for access and safety as applied to the handicapped.

National Transportation Act, 1986

Another major drawback of the Bill is that it contains no reserve clause tying enforcement of the Act to regional development objectives.

Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Government has refused to recognize the importance of regional economic development. We feel this position is totally unacceptable and shows a lack of sensitivity to the fact that Canada's population is scattered over a country with the second largest territory in the world.

Mr. Speaker, in its present form, the proposed legislation contains no safeguards against regional reductions in service, abandonment of certain routes and railway lines and other eventualities. Considering the highly competitive market we shall have after deregulation, Mr. Speaker, we feel it is imperative that certain safeguards against loss of services be included.

Despite all the good words and suggestions of a national reconciliation and a new era in federal-provincial relationships, the Conservative Government has once again shown what it really is after. An important resolution is indeed missing from the statement of purpose of the bill, a resolution passed unanimously at the annual Prime Minister's Meeting held in Saint-John's, Newfoundland last August.

Under that resolution, Mr. Speaker, any transportation policy was to have regional development as its main guiding principle. Moreover, last December 3rd, the Atlantic Cabinet declared unanimously that the Federal Government should amend Bill C-18 to state that any objective dealing with regional economic development should take precedence over the commercial cost effectiveness objectives of a transportation service should there be a conflict between those objectives.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I wish to say that the bill as introduced is incomplete, and that it may have a very negative impact not only on the transportation industry, but also on several other economic sectors. In short, Mr. Speaker, it is an inconsistent piece of legislation quite in keeping with the image of this Conservative Government.

Mr. Gilles Grondin (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate and express some of my views after all I heard on this matter in the past few days. Naturally, Mr. Speaker, you will understand that when a society, for some reason or other, stops developing, when a society does not keep up with the day-to-day developments of a situation, one is tempted to say that it is a conservative society. When a party, for some reason or other, cannot keep pace with evolution, when a party does not evolve with circumstances and developments, one could say that it is a Conservative Party. And indeed one of the basic problems that I have noticed in this debate was a very deep misunderstanding of the position of the Liberal Party on this matter by the Government Party. When some Government Members suggested that it was surprising that the Liberal Party did not oppose deregulation, and when some Government Members stressed the fact that the Liberal Party had rather consistently opposed deregulation in the past, I do not think, Mr. Speaker, that they