

Business of the House

Therefore, it is my belief that there are enough cases on the record since 1976 to warrant an examination of this issue by the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE—AUTHORITY TO TRAVEL

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations between the Parties, and I think you will find a disposition at this point in time by unanimous consent to accept and pass unanimously without debate the following order. That is to say as follows:

That, notwithstanding any Standing or Special Order of this House,

(a) the Standing Committee on Research, Science and Technology be empowered to travel to Winnipeg from Sunday, June 8 to Tuesday, June 10, 1986 and that the appropriate staff accompany the committee; and

(b) the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure be empowered to travel to Washington, D. C. and Sacramento, California in the United States from Sunday, June 8 to Friday, June 13, 1986 and that the appropriate staff accompany the Committee.

Mr. Speaker: I take it there is unanimous consent for the introduction of those orders.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: There being such consent, shall the motion carry?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Carried and so ordered.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

TRANSPORT

SAFETY IN TRANSPORTATION—ECONOMIC REGULATIONS

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make an important statement on transportation safety. I know Canadians are vitally interested in the safety of their transportation system so today I would like to outline my current initiatives and future directions in transportation safety. Since taking office I have made a strong commitment to improving transportation safety in Canada.

Achievement of the best possible level of safety in each mode is the most fundamental component of my legislative mandate. As I have said many times in this House, levels of safety are not being and will not be compromised in order to achieve any other transportation or government objective. Safe transportation is our most important product.

Consistent with this Government's commitment to eliminating obstacles to growth and to reducing Government intervention, one of our key transportation objectives is to revise the

National Transportation Act so as to reform economic regulation in order to encourage innovation and enterprise.

Some have claimed that transportation safety may be at risk because of our economic regulatory reform initiatives. I want to assure you and all Hon. Members of the House that safety will not be compromised. My reform proposals deal only with economic regulation.

Our commitment is that we will neither propose nor permit any economic regulatory reform that might be detrimental to safety standards. Safety programs will continue to be strengthened to achieve improved levels of safety in each mode.

You are also aware of the Government's commitment to a comprehensive expenditure reduction program designed to eliminate duplication of services and to reduce administrative overhead. Resourcing for safety, however, has been increased, while other reductions have taken place. For example, over the last two years, 220 new person years have been added in the areas of transportation of dangerous goods, aviation safety and highway safety.

Canada's safety record is very good across all modes; air, marine, rail and highway. Canada has an excellent transportation safety record of which we can all be proud. In the air mode between 1981 and 1985, reported accidents declined by 37 per cent. Reported fatalities declined by 62 per cent. During this same period the number of registered aircraft increased by 10 per cent and the number of passengers flown increased by 2 per cent.

In the last four years Canada's national and regional airlines, which carry the bulk of our passengers, flew over 87 million passengers with minimal loss of life.

Looking at the marine mode, there has been as well a continued reduction in loss of life, despite having over 25,000 commercial and fishing vessels operating in Canada.

Between 1981 and 1985 fatalities on Canadian highways have been reduced by 25 per cent, while the number of accidents have dropped by close to 10 per cent. The number of registered Canadian vehicles increased by 8 per cent over the same period, and the number of licensed drivers rose by 18 per cent. Recent data suggests that Canadians are driving more, and consequently the risk of mishap is increasing. This reinforces the need to look for new opportunities for improvement.

Rail safety has also been improving over recent years. For instance, from 1981 to 1985 the number of accidents decreased by 25 per cent while the number of fatalities decreased by 17 per cent. With the recent tragedy in Hinton, where 23 people lost their lives, the actual and perceived safety of railways has been brought to the forefront. I have already taken steps, pending results of the current inquiry, to reduce the possibility of this type of accident occurring in the future.