

National Transportation Act, 1986

and workers. It has not received enough study by us and by those groups. Thousands of Canadian jobs are at risk. I would like to say to Hon. Members that many of these jobs are jobs held by women. It is women who will most likely be the first fired and laid off as we move into deregulation.

Public safety, regional development, vital transportation services and Canadian sovereignty are other matters which we feel are at risk.

● (1540)

The Bill is of particular concern to people in my riding of Vancouver East. There are many transportation workers in this riding. It is the place where many modes of transportation converge, the rail lines, shipping in the Port of Vancouver, and also the airlines. Many of my constituents work in the field of transportation. We are concerned because we believe this legislation could be quite detrimental to the Port of Vancouver, which is struggling to compete with American ports to the south. I will enlarge on this later.

It is also of concern in my riding because of the dangerous situation where the Canadian Transport Commission approved the transfer of dangerous goods. That also has implications.

Transportation is very important to the Canadian economy. We all know the country could not survive without an effective, efficient, and affordable system of all modes of transportation. It is completely basic to bringing together our country.

The Conservative Government has not bothered to do a thorough impact study of what deregulation through this legislation will do to the transportation system. I am not on the committee, but I am sure my hon. colleagues who are will confirm that the Government has not consulted with various groups that will be affected, certainly not widely enough.

In summary, we know that this Act would abolish the Canadian Transport Commission and replace it with a much weaker National Transportation Agency that will have no authority over fares, routes, or entry or exit into the industry. It probably would have far fewer employees than the CTC. There are many concerns that a national body, such as the Canadian Transport Commission that should be dealing with it, requires workers.

It would replace the "public necessity and convenience" which is the test for entry or exit into the industry. This is very critical to Canada, and an implicit part of our national identity and cohesion that we have this criteria of public necessity and convenience as the test for entry or exit into the industry. It would be replaced with something called: "Fit, willing, and able" test. I would like to have more explanation about who is fit, willing, and able? Certainly the Government is not fit, willing, and able. I shudder, as do many Canadians, to think of what types of things we are putting into its hands and into the hands of the private industry sector without the type of controls and the over-all planning that is in the interest of all Canadians.

The Act would also make it easier for companies to abandon airline and rail routes and leave remote communities stranded. In British Columbia I have had reports that this has already happened with airlines, and many of the traditional air route schedules have been changed. In the smaller and northern communities, there is not the same type of coverage for essential transportation by air, which is very important to those communities.

The Act would end regulatory oversight over fares, routes, and schedules, except in some remote areas. It would allow rail carriers to strike confidential contracts with individual shippers. It would open the entry of United States' rail lines into the Canadian market. This subject is of great concern to us. I will return to that in a minute.

I fully support my colleague who has proposed this amendment to withdraw the legislation and send it back to the standing committee. We cannot allow such significant legislation to pass without a thorough knowledge of the impact on safety, job loss, and service cut-backs. The Conservative Government—and I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, because I know you represent this Government, and I do not suppose you would agree with this view—is only too anxious to imitate everything that the Americans do, and to do it as quickly as possible. Many Conservatives should be concerned about the effect that this type of imitation or—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. I hope the Hon. Member will not involve the Chair in the debate.

Ms. Mitchell: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, you are quite right.

The United States' model of transportation deregulation has been disastrous in many areas. We have received documentation from other speakers of the impact it has had on United States workers. There are concerns from American consumers about the costs and the inadequate services that have resulted. There is also concern from regions of the United States which are not in the central areas, but are off the beaten track. What will happen to some of the smaller communities in remote areas in Canada if we do, which it appears we will, deregulate transportation here?

Ironically, I understand that although the Government is eager to imitate the United States' model in many of these things, government Members who are on the *Freedom to Move* committee refused to travel to the United States to study this issue, or to bring United States' experts to testify at hearings in Canada. I wish the committee would bring some consumers from the United States, the people who can tell us first-hand about the impact on the lives of ordinary people.

The only hearings on this vital issue took place in 10 short weeks. The only travel was to Winnipeg, Halifax, and Vancouver. I can tell you that not many people in Vancouver were aware and prepared to participate in this important hearing. The hearing in Vancouver took place in one day, and dealt only with vague generalities of transportation regulations. They were very short on the specifics. People in my part of