

National Transportation Act, 1986

around because, once this more than 20-year old transportation legislation has been put through the deregulation process, a community or company will be in a position to negotiate more favourable rates for its products, whereas until now producers and companies did not have any leeway since under the law only one carrier was licensed to transport their products at fixed rates in a competition-free market. The producer or company that was saddled with higher shipping rates sometimes had to go through incredible contortions to be able to produce his product and bring it to market to compete, while today, producers, whole communities and our exporters as well will be given a fair chance to negotiate cheaper rates, both for finished products and also for the products they have to modify or process.

Mr. Speaker, under the present legislation, often when people need a shipping licence, they come before the Transport Commission and are told: Sorry, the licence has already been given to a company or several companies, and even if they only provide a service once or twice a week or even once a month, they have that licence. This means other shippers cannot come in because there are already companies who are doing the shipping, often at much higher rates. Under the proposed legislation, Mr. Speaker, a company that is willing to take the initiative and create jobs, a company that wants to set up a new service or improve an existing one, and perhaps charge lower rates, will be given a licence. It will be up to the other companies to ask the CTC for a ruling on whether the new shipper is harming existing companies or the community or the companies concerned.

Mr. Speaker, this Government, whose priority is the development of our economy, has realized the importance of deregulation in the transportation sector. If we want to get ahead, and we are now in 1987 . . . I fail to understand why the members of the New Democratic Party are opposed to a Bill that will in fact protect the consumer. It will protect Canadians. Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand why they object to a Bill that helps the little man. We have always been branded by the New Democrats and the Liberals as a Government that supposedly ignores the needs of the people. Now we are meeting those needs in this National Transportation Act, they object, saying we are not protecting the people and may be protecting one group more than another, although the very opposite is true. We are telling existing companies—I have nothing against the companies operating at this time—they no longer have a monopoly over territory, rates or service. We want to give other companies a chance to say: I'm ready to show what I can do. I want to tender against these people. I want to negotiate.

In the railway sector, companies were limited to certain regions and certain routes by the various railway companies, and the manufacturers using the services of these railway companies could not negotiate rates.

Mr. Speaker, Bill C-18 before the House today will have a major impact on the economy of this country. The safety issue has been raised. Mr. Speaker, as far as Bill C-18 is concerned,

we have said we will be even stricter about enforcement of the safety regulations in the National Transportation Act. That is what we intend to do, that is what is in the Bill, and, as the Member representing the riding of Chambly in the House of Commons, a riding that is so important to the economic development of the metropolitan area of Montreal, especially on the South Shore, I welcome this opportunity today to speak to this Bill, to represent the people of Chambly and to thank the Government and private enterprise, because it is with this kind of legislation that we will continue to create employment and develop our economy, not just in our own region but across Canada.

[English]

Mr. George Henderson (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-18 and, of course, the motion which would send it back to committee for further study. At the outset I must say that we on this side of the House are certainly not against the principle of deregulation. What we are against is the contents of the Bill, especially as they relate to safety in general, and safety in the air traffic field in particular. I believe we must have some safety safeguards in this Bill to protect the travelling public. We must also have some safeguards to ensure that regional interests are not jeopardized by rail abandonment, or by transportation companies taking over the lucrative routes of the region, and leaving other regions of the country with an inefficient service at a higher cost. This will make some of those regions even less competitive than they are.

● (1250)

Since I come from Prince Edward Island, I wish to briefly touch upon this transportation Bill as it pertains to P.E.I. It goes back a long way to the terms of Confederation in 1873 when the Dominion of Canada was supporting or guaranteeing an efficient ferry service to the mainland that was to be operated continuously winter and summer. Even under those terms of agreement, it was not until 1917, 40 years after Confederation, that service was provided from the island to the mainland that could qualify as an efficient and continuous service in summer and winter. I raise these points, because I think that I can develop a case here in the next few minutes to show you what has gone on in our province and, indeed, what is likely to continue under this Bill.

I have before me a clipping from *The Charlottetown Guardian* dated Tuesday, March 19, 1940. It is a speech given by a Mr. J. O. Hyndman. You may know some of the Hyndmans who are in Alberta, who are direct descendants of Mr. Hyndman. One of the Hyndman boys was a member of the Alberta Government. He probably still is. The headline states: "P.E.I. Producers Facing Unfair Discrimination". In this article, Mr. Hyndman discusses the Confederation contract. He states:

Prior to the Car Ferry Service being established by the Borden Conservative Government, Island farmers realized for their field crops only fifty percent of the prices realized by the farmers of the Mainland, according to the Dominion Year Book, on account of our products having to be shipped out, in the Fall months,