

It is true that there has been a change of heart on the part of the Government of Manitoba. Motivation is not a matter in which we get involved here, but it is true that the Government of Manitoba has changed its position. However, I understand that the Bill incorporates the agreement of February, 1985 which was signed by all 10 provincial Governments and the two territorial Governments. Consultation is something on which we cannot be criticized in terms of Bill C-19.

Referring to the question of safety, the Hon. Member referred to a sheet. The sheet from which he was quoting—and I also have it—was provided by the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin). It is dated November. I understand that significant progress was made last week on some of the matters, not all of them. The important point is that the safety code will come into force in January, 1990, a full year before the fitness-only test comes into effect. Many other things in terms of safety, which is all important, will be done beforehand. There is no comparison between what we are doing in terms of safety and what the United States has done or has not done, I should say.

The Hon. Member comes from a part of the country, as do I, which is resource-based. Many men and women in his constituency earn their livelihoods from shipping timber, mining or other natural products. Who will speak for those men and women? With respect, no one in the NDP spoke for the shippers or for men and women working in the resource industry. Certainly the Hon. Member is not doing it today. I would appreciate hearing his comments.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member's last comment was not accurate, but I will not get into debating the inaccuracies or nuances in the comment. However, I should like to provide for the Parliamentary Secretary a letter which was written on February 10, 1987. The letter is from the Canadian Trucking Association and says the following:

The point that doesn't seem to be getting across in the debate so far is that the reverse onus test is useless so we will have defacto deregulation by January 1, 1988 and there is in fact no National Safety Code. We had people at a meeting of CCMTA last week in Victoria on this along with all other interest groups. Even the shippers agree with us. The fact is that there is a huge lack of consensus as to what should go into a National Safety Code.

Various provinces want to have different vehicle inspection standards and it is not clear they are prepared to recognize the vehicle inspection standards of adjoining provinces or states. Also, there is no consensus on a national approach to regulating hours of work for extraprovincial truckers. Under the current Canada Labour Code there is minimal enforcement and certainly none for smaller truckers, which is the group that will proliferate after deregulation. Any attempt to suggest that there is presently agreement on a National Safety Code and its contents is extremely misleading.

• (1650)

I think that letter speaks for itself. The whole matter of safety is of grave concern not only to the shippers but to the companies that will be involved in the movement of goods.

I understand that this legislation requires that Canadian buses driving in the United States have American drivers once they cross the border. I understand as well that American buses coming to Canada do not require the same thing. Is

Motor Vehicle Transport Act, 1986

there such a difference? Second, could the Parliamentary Secretary, who has been stick-handling this Bill through the House of Commons, indicate if any decision has been made on whether or not the Government plans to allow or encourage the committee responsible for this to travel across Canada to hold hearings in appropriate places?

Mr. Kilgour: Mr. Speaker, I wonder who is asking the questions. I am happy to note the reversal of positions.

My understanding is that there are 1,000 Canadian trucking companies doing business in the United States and for the most part they employ Americans. The American companies doing business in Canada employ Canadians. The Hon. Member has said that when Canadian buses enter the United States, American drivers get on. My understanding is—and please correct me if I am wrong—that it works both ways.

The question of travel for the committee is one that is open to negotiation. Given all of the consultation that has occurred and knowing that the New Democratic Party will oppose this Bill today, tomorrow and six months from now, the committee will not travel and we have yet to be persuaded that it needs to travel given the fact that, as I understand it, something like 60 or 70 people have indicated that they want to give evidence before the committee. As of now, the likelihood of travel is not great. I do not want to encourage the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap into thinking otherwise.

I hope the Canadian Trucking Association did not mean to tell us that the reverse onus test will go into effect immediately. In fact, the reverse onus test will go into effect a year after the safety code comes into effect, and that will occur in 1990.

I have just been handed a note indicating to me that the bus regulation is not being changed by this Bill. The same provisions that are in the present legislation are merely repeated in Bill C-19.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, that is the point that I was attempting to make. Canadian bus drivers who want to go to Florida, Ohio or wherever have to stop and bring on American drivers once they cross the border. An American citizen must drive a Canadian bus in the United States. However, when buses from the United States with American drivers come to Canada, they continue on their merry way into Alberta, Quebec, Ontario or the Northwest Territories. Something is wrong there.

This is simply one example of the point we have tried to make on many occasions. Why is it that Americans can have access to our highway systems but we cannot have the same access to theirs? Again, the Americans come out the winners for whatever reason.

The fact is that large American trucking companies will have full access into Canada in order to compete with our trucking companies, which are by definition significantly smaller. The operations in the U.S. can use parent companies to make deals with subsidiaries in Canada to use only American carriers. We will be blown out of the water, and that is the point we are trying to make.