

REQUEST THAT COMMITTEE STUDY EFFECTS OF
DEREGULATION IN UNITED STATES

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. He is aware that members of the Transport Committee from all three Parties have indicated to him the timeframe given the committee to study the effects of deregulation of the transportation industry in Canada was indeed short and restrained. The Minister is also aware that for this reason, among others, both Opposition Parties are producing minority reports on the committee's work. Would the Minister agree to give the Transport Committee the time necessary to travel to the United States in order to study the effects of deregulation on safety in that country and report back to Parliament, before he introduces legislation deregulating the airline industry in this country?

I say to the Minister that the committee draws no conclusions in advance. The committee merely submits to the Minister that we have an obligation to learn from the American experience—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. With respect, the Hon. Member's question is becoming a little long.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised at the Hon. Member's question. He is obviously confused about the process. The process that we are undertaking in terms of rewriting national transportation legislation is really unprecedented in this country. This Government has put forth a position paper for public debate. The legislation is not even drafted as yet. We are awaiting the comments of the standing committee and the reaction of the public. We will certainly welcome the minority reports, if that is what the opposition Parties choose to do. However, there is no legislation before the House. The legislation is not yet drafted. There will be ample time to deal with these issues.

I repeat, and I think the Hon. Member shares this view, that the urgency of moving to update the transportation legislation in this country to the effect that it will reflect the realities of the 1980s and 1990s is long overdue.

LENGTH OF COMMITTEE STUDY

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member shares the view that we have to move with progress; but the Hon. Member believes we should do it with our eyes fully open. I wish to say to the Minister that he knows that this committee and members of it have requested an opportunity to study the effects of deregulation on safety in the United States. I would like to quote—

Some Hon. Members: Come on!

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I quote from a witness—

Mr. Speaker: I think the Hon. Member is embarking on a long preamble. Will he put his supplementary question, please?

Oral Questions

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister again if he does not agree that a one-month timeframe for a standing committee to study a document which took the Minister 15 months to prepare and release to the public is not unduly short. Would it not be worth our while to study the experience south of the border before we introduce deregulation in the airline industry in this country? That is all we ask, with no conclusions drawn before we have had a chance to look at the record south of the border.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member wants to stonewall progress on the initiative that we have undertaken, so be it. That is fine. We indicated last February that we would move to reform the legislative and regulatory mechanisms which govern transportation in this country. We invited public response at that time. We produced a position paper. It has been widely debated. We've gotten the views of the Standing Committee. We've gotten the views of industry.

● (1125)

I understand some 177 briefs were submitted to the Standing Committee on Transport. I have had something like 150 briefs submitted to me personally. Surely that should form the nucleus of drafting the legislation.

All Hon. Members will then have an opportunity to debate the issue and to engage in further hearings, if that is the desire of the committee.

COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I point out to the Minister that I said "members of all three Parties" and I indicated the time was too short. I ask the Minister if he believes that a Standing Committee on Transport which is studying the most important reregulation or deregulation of the transportation industry, visiting only three centres in this country and now being refused permission to go to the United States to study an environment where the experience has been in place since 1978, is an acceptable way to proceed? In a desire to help the process to produce better legislation, I ask the Minister to allow this committee to go south of the border to have a look at the experience in the United States before we proceed with legislation in this country.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is a member of the Standing Committee, and he may very well be on the Steering Committee. With his Johnny-come-lately attitude, perhaps he may want to go back to the Steering Committee and make that a formal request. That is the process which should be followed.

I don't dictate what the Standing Committee does. It should be done through the aegis of the Chairman of the Steering Committee. The Hon. Member should know that.