

National Transportation Act, 1986

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sure that the House takes note of the very appropriate comment made by the Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy).

The question is on Motion No. 50 standing in the name of the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin). Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the nays have it.

And more than five Members having risen:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 114(11), the recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West) moved:

Motion No. 19:

That Bill C-18, be amended in Clause 35 by adding immediately line 40 at page 14 the following:

"(8) The Agency may amend, suspend, or terminate any licence or operating authority issued under this Act, when satisfied that the holder of such a licence or operating authority has not complied or has refused to comply with the spirit and intent of section 3(1)(a) of this Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this amendment would refer to the clauses on safety and the spirit of safety standards, to give teeth to the clause and allow the agency to make an assessment of the carrier's likelihood or indeed ability to operate safely.

We realize that some of the safety standards are the responsibility of Transport Canada, but we believe the agency, which has the powers to issue, amend, suspend, or cancel licences to carriers, should have some responsibility in the area of safe operations.

In order for the agency to make a more rapid decision as to whether or not a carrier is operating safely, or is even able to operate safely, it must have the staff to make those assessments in various parts of the country, as well as have the capacity to reach a conclusion and take action with respect to the safe operations of that particular carrier.

We believe this is a proper role for and duty of the new transportation agency. Such a responsibility should not rest only with a handful of people somewhere in the nether regions of the Department of Transport. I am not convinced that the experience until now has been very good or thorough in terms of safe operating practices, or even if new carriers are able to operate safely, with adequate financing, equipment and

adequately trained employees. These are standards that should be a condition of licencing.

The agency should have sufficient employees to report in this area so that it can better judge whether or not a licence should be issued, amended, suspended or cancelled. I hope the Government will agree to Motion No. 19.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent): Mr. Speaker, to repeat what was said by the Hon. Member who just spoke, Clause 35 defines or gives certain powers to the Agency. To those powers, the Hon. Member would like to add the following paragraph (8) which says that the Agency may amend, suspend, or terminate any licence or operating authority issued under this Act, when satisfied that the holder of such a licence or operating authority has not complied or has refused to comply with the spirit and intent of Section 3(1)(a) of this Act. In fact, Clause 3(1)(a) of the Bill as it now stands says that the National Transportation System should meet the highest possible safety standards.

So if we look at both paragraph (8) of Clause 35 and Clause 3(1)(a), we see how sensible this amendment is, because here again, Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of protecting the safety of Canadians, and if in this whole deregulation exercise that will soon be upon us, we do not give safety the attention it deserves, we may be in for some nasty surprises. None of us wants to get up one fine morning and read about a serious accident with loss of life that happened because somebody, somewhere failed to monitor the safety of our transportation system. Mr. Speaker, here we have an opportunity to show how serious we take the whole subject of safety. Throughout the process of considering this Bill, the Minister and his officials told us, time and time again, that the safety of the public was first and foremost in their minds. Now they have a chance to prove they were sincere about their dedication to the safety of Canadians.

I think Hon. Members here in the House and behind the curtains would do well to read this motion carefully and give it their full support, to keep safety a priority throughout our transportation system.

• (1650)

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 19 standing in the name of the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin). Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.