

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 4 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.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will 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. We will move to Motion No. 5.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. You may want to reconsider the order in which you are calling the motions. Debate on Motion No. 2 will also cover debate on Motion No. 44. I suggest that perhaps we could deal with those and get them out of the way. We will then be caught up and could proceed to Motion No. 5.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If the Hon. Member for Regina West has no objection, the Chair would prefer to proceed with Motion No. 2 when we reach Motion No. 44.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent) moved:

Motion no. 5

That Bill C-18 be amended in Clause 3 by striking out lines 29 to 34 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:

"to regional economic development and commercial viability should be an objective both in the operation of transportation services and in the provision of facilities and services in direct support thereof, and where the Government of Canada decides or the Government of Canada and one or more provincial governments jointly decide that any such service or facilities and service is required for the achievement of national or regional, social and economic development objectives, that decision requires that those objectives take precedence over the objective of commercial viability whenever the two are in conflict. Where the Government of Canada decides or the Government of Canada and one or more provincial governments jointly decide that the achievement of national or regional social and economic development objectives requires that these objectives take precedence over the objectives of commercial viability, the benefits and costs involved should be identified and any relevant additional costs assumed by the government or governments concerned."

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is both a privilege and a duty to introduce this motion to amend Clause 3(1)(d) of Bill C-18. I appreciate that you recognized the motion and accepted it. To me, this is a sign that you recognize the importance of the

National Transportation Act, 1986

motion for regional development. In fact, the intent of the motion is indeed to strengthen the importance of regional development. And as you read it, the motion would ensure that regional development takes precedence when decisions affecting transportation are made by this Government.

Mr. Speaker, the motion would clarify the Minister's authority. We know already that the Minister is empowered to act, as described in Clause 3(2), which states:

The Minister may, with the approval of the Governor in Council and on such terms and conditions as the Governor in Council may specify, enter into agreements in support of the national transportation policy set out in subsection (1) or in respect of such transportation matters as the Minister considers appropriate.

The Minister indicated himself to the committee, on April 7, 1987, that he had that power. He said, and I quote:

[*English*]

There is provision in the legislation now for the Minister to enter into agreements in support of the national transportation policy or in respect of such transportation measures that the Minister considers appropriate.

[*Translation*]

Therefore, it is clear that the Minister already has that power.

The purpose of my motion, Mr. Speaker, is to define that power of the Minister more clearly, to streamline and reinforce it. With this motion, I am trying to develop a procedure under which regional development interests would take precedence over business interests when the two objectives conflict.

There lies indeed the major difference between this motion and the motion which was accepted when the Bill was studied in committee. In fact, Section 3(1)(d) of the Bill has been amended and Paragraph (d) now reads:

Transportation is recognized as a key to regional economic development, and the commercial viability of transportation lines should be balanced against the goals of regional economic development so that the potential economic assets of each region may be fully developed

Mr. Speaker, these words now contained in that paragraph are of course justified. However, I think that is not good enough when we are talking about regional development.

Those words have insufficient clout to force the Government, the Minister and their staff to take regional development into account, and most of all, to give regional development precedence.

And if we really are to have a regional development policy which has some clout and which really meets the needs of the region, that should be acknowledged by all Ministers.

And if the objectives of regional development are only balanced against the commercial viability of transportation lines, we have no guarantee. It is too vague, too general. In fact, the Minister can forget or dodge that commitment. That is why I would like this paragraph to state that the objectives of regional development have precedence over commercial interests.