

know what they are talking about. This is what they said to the Transport Committee:

• (1150)

Prior to deregulation in the U.S., many airline industry experts expected that as the economic regulation by the Civil Aeronautics Board disappeared it would be replaced by a higher level of safety regulation and inspection by the Federal Aviation Administration, particularly in view of the expected influx of new entrants. This did not happen. Rather, from an inspectorate of approximately 2,000 responsible for monitoring 237 air carriers in 1979, the FAA reduced its number of inspectors to some 1,300 responsible for 470 air carriers by early 1984.

Furthermore, between 1980 and 1985 much of the time of these inspectors was taken up with certifying new operators, so that the normal inspection process could not be followed. It was only last year that financial restrictions were lifted to allow hiring of additional inspectors, but the number is still, and will remain, below the 1979 level.

Since 1984, when growing safety concerns led to more vigilant and intense airline safety audits, we have seen record fines levied against numerous U.S. airlines, large and small, established and new entrants. Some have argued that these actions by the FAA have demonstrated a satisfactory level of inspection; we, however, take the less comforting view that there is clearly a very unsatisfactory level of compliance with regulations.

Experience in the United States since the beginning of the transition to economic deregulation has shown quite clearly that a greater burden falls to the safety regulator.

This is what the Nielsen task force was saying in 1985. Let us remember that that task force of the previous Deputy Prime Minister of Canada came out with those types of opinions. In other words, this is clearly the view of the Government. The Government is ready to believe and have faith in the industry policing itself.

It is true that for a number of years it has worked relatively well in Canada. Our record of safety is a good one. However, we will be working under a new environment. We will totally deregulate the airline industry with this legislation. Therefore, the situation and the circumstances will be different.

To continue to believe that we can let the industry police itself is dangerous. I believe that something must be done to ensure that government officials, independent people, will be able to check the work of each company in order to protect properly and effectively the public that uses airlines. To restrict it exclusively to the industry, as the Americans have done, is a very dangerous course to follow. We only have to look at what is taking place in the United States to realize that American authorities have made a mistake and are compromising safety in the air in the United States, because they do not have the proper number of people to do the necessary inspections. We do not want this to happen in Canada. We are begging the Government to hire the appropriate number of people in the Department of Transport and in the various agencies created to monitor the airline industry to ensure that safety is not compromised.

We have not yet seen evidence that the Government understands. We have not yet seen person-years assigned to the Ministry and the agencies to make us believe that the Government is ready to take its responsibility. We clearly believe that the Minister of Transport and the Deputy Prime

*National Transportation Act, 1987*

Minister are very eloquent in words but are very short in terms of putting money where their mouth is.

Let me continue citing the presentation of the Canadian Air Line Pilots Association before the Standing Committee on Transport last April. It reads:

Jerry Lederer, President—of the Flying Safety Foundation has stated: "Industry does not remain indifferent to tragedy, but it faces a selection of priorities based on limited resources . . . When the highest priority is economic survival, then safety must take a back seat, and there is disturbing evidence that the traditional safety margins of the air transport industry are already being eroded.

As the representative of the airline pilot who is charged under the Aeronautics Act with direct authority over and responsibility for the safety of his passengers, crew and aircraft, CALPA is concerned at the insidious trend in the airline industry, world-wide, toward reduced safety margins.

Over the years, there has been a dramatic shift of onus in most areas of aviation safety. Where once it was safety first, cost second, with no questions asked, pilots are now increasingly faced with the burden of proving why a cost-saving procedure is not safe, or the even more difficult task of showing why it is less safe to the degree that it should not be done. Where once there was a strong element of pride within the industry in providing the very best in safety and service, we are seeing more and more reliance upon the letter of the law. Cost considerations are gaining pre-eminence, as a financially hard-pressed industry simply has no incentive to spend more on safety than is required to meet minimum regulatory standards.

[Translation]

I firmly believe what pilots are telling us. Day in and day out these people have to live with what is going on in the United States since deregulation. We ought to listen when they warn us to be careful, and this is what I had in mind Monday when I directed my question to the Deputy Prime Minister. I reject the Deputy Prime Minister's allegation that I was indulging in petty politics when I asked him what his Government was prepared to do to make sure that Canadian air safety will not be jeopardized.

Allow me to continue quoting from this very important brief which was submitted to the Committee on Transport:

[English]

Nor is it only the commercial side of the industry that is being adversely affected. We also see it in publicly funded safety services, most recently in crash, fire and rescue services. All indications are that there is a general slippage in safety standards, an erosion in safety margins that could take as many years to restore as they have to deteriorate. If so, better alarmist now than apologetic later.

The challenge is to maintain Canada's traditional attitudes toward safety and ensure that economic pressures, which can only be intensified under deregulation, do not lead to lowered margins of safety. Anything "less safe" must be rejected; we are not interested in exploring the outer limits of the safety envelope.

Bill C-18 presents no provisions to allay our fears that the inevitable economic pressures already affecting all segments of the airline industry will also affect safety. No one other than members of CALPA through our constitutional objectives, has been charged with maintaining the highest standard of safety; instead there is a vague reference to "acceptable" levels. This shortcoming must be addressed.

• (1200)

Indeed, members of the Liberal Party have tried in committee to address it and present amendments to change the