

National Transportation Act, 1986

economic well-being Moncton and the surrounding areas have enjoyed. Surely, this giant corporation with revenues of hundreds of millions of dollars a year could spend just a little more to do the maintenance work in Moncton rather than in Montreal or Winnipeg. Surely, a company which was giving some thought and consideration to the well-being of the country would not have made the completely heartless decision to close up the Moncton shops.

I wonder if the President and the members of management of the CNR have ever thought that while they are doing quite well we are living in a period in which the economies of this country, and virtually every other country of the world are changing almost every day in almost revolutionary ways. Let them consider that their sons or daughters had entered the employment market and five or ten years after they establish themselves in whatever area they had chosen, the company just said, "We are closing up shop and there is nothing for you"? Have they ever put themselves in that position? Have they ever considered what is going to happen to the people in Moncton, many of whom have worked for years in the rail shops?

● (1540)

I see the concern of railway workers growing in my City of Winnipeg. We have maintenance shops established by both the CPR and CNR, each of which employs several thousand workers. I could go there tomorrow, take the Minister of Transport (Mr. Crosbie) with me, and meet workers who are second and third generation employees of either the CPR or the CNR.

Until recently, people whose parents or grandparents worked for the railway companies, knew that if they became employed by those companies and did their jobs, they would have a good, well paying and interesting job for the rest of their lives, but these days many people with years of seniority have been laid off, are being laid off and will be laid off. Those who are working there now are not advising their children to look to the railways for employment in the future because they have learned from experience that what we have is a transportation system, which has to be efficient, egged on by the so-called free enterprise system Government whose only interest is the profit and loss balance sheet. To be efficient means to forget about the have-not areas, forget about the people in slow growth areas, be tough, be heartless, be ruthless. I am never going to agree to that and that is why I support this amendment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this debate on the amendment to Bill C-18 proposed by my colleague from New Brunswick.

Everyone is aware that Bill C-18 has been introduced to simplify or caricature, no more, no less. This measure paves the way for what is referred to in the transportation sector, especially railway or road transportation, as the law of the jungle, the law of the strongest, which means that the rich and big swallow the small.

We know that the consequences of this policy on the part of the Conservative government are such that major urban

centres will not be unduly affected in terms of job losses or lower quality services. Hardest hit will be the remote regions, regions where people are poorer, where corporate structures are not as sound or do not have the same potential as those of major companies.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge the Members of the Conservative Party to think before voting against this motion of my colleague from New Brunswick who, for as long as he has been a Member of Parliament, has never stopped fighting to save the jobs of the railway and maintenance shop workers in his region.

Unfortunately, we have had no results, thanks to the Minister of Transport's incompetence and failure to act, but I hardly think everybody in this Government is as incompetent as the Minister of Transport (Mr. Crosbie). There must be at least a few people with some sensitivity, and the immediate impact of my colleague's amendment would be to give the Minister of Transport—after all, some day we will have a better one who will take his responsibilities seriously—the legal authority to prevent a railway carrier from making profitability, dollars and cents as they say, the only consideration and from saying: It doesn't really pay to provide services to this region, we will abandon those lines. What this does to people and their jobs is not a priority. Because the Government has decided to adopt this attitude and let what I would call the law of the jungle and the worship of the dollar prevail, the people suffer and remote areas are deprived of essential services.

I think the Hon. Member from New Brunswick is to be commended for taking this initiative. He is the sole Member for the Liberal Party in his province, and the only one who has the guts to rise in the House, time and time again, to defend the interests of the entire Province of New Brunswick. Meanwhile, the voices of the Conservative Members of this province are muffled to the point of silence. Midas Muffler must have done a job on them! And with all those companies closing down. The Government can do whatever it wants to harm the interests of this province, but the Conservative Members see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil.

Mr. Speaker, I hope this time they will finally wake up. They don't have to say anything. All they have to do is rise in their seats and vote in favour of this motion. No one will know.

I am sure that my hon. colleague would be proud to be able to say that in his province, his Conservative colleagues have risen above partisan considerations, that his colleagues from the Conservative Party in New Brunswick have considered the interests of the province, the interests of the people, the interests of workers, and regardless of partisan considerations, have followed the example of our Liberal colleague. But no, Mr. Speaker, I cannot see one of them doing that, we have not heard one of them. What are they all doing?

What my honourable colleague is suggesting would of course help protect jobs in areas like New Brunswick. Even in