

*National Transportation Act, 1986*

to Move proposals was released almost two years ago. During the fall of 1985, it was studied extensively by the standing committee which held hearings across Canada. Its findings were a key element in shaping Bill C-18. This spring, the committee studied the Bill in depth again, heard witnesses, received briefs and travelled from coast to coast.

I do not think that anyone can say that this legislation has been hurried or rushed through the House. It was carefully thought out and everyone interested has been given every chance to put forward views and to have them considered.

I think the committee examined this matter in the spirit of parliamentary collegiality. We benefited from its analysis of the issues and I believe the committee provides another example of the success of parliamentary reform and the rules that give committees more power. The amendments proposed by the committee have made the Bill a better Bill.

I would like to reiterate the principles of the Bill. The first and overriding principle is that our transportation system must be safe. Our commitment to this is firm. Clause 3 of the Bill enshrines that principle in legislation for the first time. Safety is part of the entry test and the ongoing operating requirements for carriers in every mode.

As well, and this has to be repeated time and time again because opponents of the Bill are constantly putting out erroneous information on this, a uniform national safety code for trucks and buses has been implemented by both the federal and the provincial Governments. It will be incorporated in regulations under Bill C-19, the Bill which accompanies this Bill. Those Bills complement other initiatives the Government has taken to improve safety.

Hon. Members will recall major safety amendments to the Aeronautics Act and the Canada Shipping Act. In the fall, we will bring forward a rail safety Bill and a Bill to create an independent board to investigate accidents in rail, air and marine travel. We are improving safety requirements in all modes.

What about economic regulation, the focus of this Bill? We are adding two important principles to complement the long-standing objective which has been to have an efficient, effective and adequate transportation system. This Bill adds several other important principles to that.

First, transportation systems exist to serve the needs of shippers and of travellers. That is one important principle. Second, competition and market forces wherever possible should be the prime agents in providing for or spurring on viable and effective transportation systems. Those principles are not new, they are not foreign, but they do represent a major shift in the philosophy of regulation for transportation in Canada.

The current regime was put in place in 1967. Since then, the world economy, the Canadian economy and Canada's transportation industry have changed significantly. The regulatory regime simply did not keep pace. As a result, at the present

time it impedes rather than supports growth and development, it stifles competition in all modes of transportation, it reduces the competitiveness of producers and it hinders the free movement of goods and people. That is why the *Freedom to Move* legislation has received such widespread support.

Bills C-18 and C-19 will affect air travellers and shippers throughout Canada and businesses of all types in all regions, from the small family-operated concern to the large integrated corporation, from the manufacturers of goods to resource producers. All will have new choices in getting their goods to market.

The Bill will increase competition in air, rail and trucking. The objective is to provide the best service at the best price to shippers and to air passengers through competition. We need an efficient transportation system for economic growth in all regions of Canada. This is part of the Government's over-all economic framework and its commitment to put Canadians back to work.

Enduring, meaningful jobs will be created or maintained in all regions wherever transportation service at a better price will make a resource producer, a manufacturer or any other business more competitive in the market-place. This Bill and the principles behind it are badly needed and more than warranted in the cause of regional economic development. The producers and those who have had to deal with non-competitive conditions in transportation will be most benefited.

There were a number of amendments made to the Bill by the Standing Committee on Transport. First, the Bill as tabled recognized the principle that transportation is a key to regional economic development. However, committee members felt that that statement in the Bill should be strengthened, and I agreed. The question of commercial viability of transportation links will be balanced with regional development objectives so that the economic strengths of each region can be realized. That principle will be part of the definition of public interest to be applied by the new agency in the decisions it makes.

Bill C-18 will give us what is required for lasting economic development in all regions and for an efficient, effective and competitive transportation system. As well, to ensure that the agency takes full account of regional needs and opportunities, the legislation will now require that at least one member of the agency be from British Columbia, and that there be one from the prairie provinces, one from Ontario, one from Quebec and one from the Atlantic provinces. The Bill now provides that if the agency establishes regional offices, one will be in Atlantic Canada and one will be in western Canada.

The Government is also ensuring that disabled persons have access to the transportation system. That commitment is reflected in the policy statement contained in Clause 3 of the Bill. A year ago the Government announced its intention to fulfil this commitment through human rights legislation. Transport officials and the Advisory Committee on Transportation of Disabled Persons have been drafting accessibility standards to be adopted as regulations. Representations were