

Motor Vehicle Transport Act, 1986

been laid off. Also there has been a large number of bankruptcies and increasing concentration with small trucking companies being picked up by larger ones and an elimination of competition as a consequence. Also there has been in the United States—and it is likely to happen here—a loss of service to the hinterland.

Although initially there were generally lower prices in the United States, those lower prices have only continued in the corridors between larger centres. More remote areas are being faced with either no service at all or more costly service.

The industry in Canada has developed a great pride in service over the year. It has been proud of the fact that it reached into every nook and cranny of the country and provided service to small communities. With deregulation it will no longer be required to do this.

The present structure is such that, for example, a trucker will go into a smaller community in northern Saskatchewan once or twice a week even if he does not have a full load. Everyone knows that that service is there. It has been suggested that if deregulation is put into effect, there will be no necessity to provide routine service—in other words, service when one needs it—regardless of whether or not the truck is full. I recognize that Canadians pay for that extra service, but they are glad to do it, just to be sure it is there when needed.

That effect of deregulation bothers me most because my constituency is a northern one. Many small communities along the northern portion of my constituency depend upon truck service for their supplies. Having lived in the far North a great deal of my life, I know what can happen if there is no routine service and small communities must depend upon someone deciding to service them when they have a full load. These small communities either end up ensuring that they have supplies on hand at all times or that they have an alternative service in place upon which they can call when regular service, which exists under the present system, disappears.

The effects of the Bill will be felt by many communities which would not mind, at the present time, a little cheaper service but are happy because they have service. If we say to truckers who want to develop a service into a small community that they may do so if they are willing and able and they make a little money, there is always an opportunity to skim the cream. If the industry is deregulated, a trucker can go into such areas to haul large loads and therefore eliminate effective service to persons who have traditionally been served in those communities. This happens even now and it will happen even more if the basis of the trucking industry is ready, willing, and able. It is dangerous.

We should not let the Government reduce service to Canadians as it has done with the Post Office, air travel, and railway service, by the abandonment of rail lines and the elimination of terminals, and as it is now doing in trucking.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Grondin (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take part in the debate on Bill C-19, especially after certain comments heard in the course of this debate, and I am referring to what was said by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Keeper) to my colleague from Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart). These comments concerned the position taken by the Liberal Party, and the question arose whether the Liberal Party was opposed to the legislation because that was its duty as the Official Opposition or whether the Liberal Party was really taking a stand against the deregulation proposed by the Government. I would like to inform the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Keeper) that the Liberal Party's position is quite clear compared with positions of the Conservative Government and the New Democratic Party. While the Government side favours privatization, the NDP often takes the middle-of-the road view, which does not necessarily reflect a socialist outlook or a social democratic philosophy.

In the course of my speech, I would like to talk about a rather special situation that exists in the riding of Saint-Maurice, where trucking companies systematically object to deregulation because to them, it means a net loss in the value of their operating licences. On the other hand, our riding has a number of pulp and paper companies which look very favourably on the kind of deregulation proposed by the Government. And that brings me to the issue of the consultation initiated by the Government, which was not complete and very superficial, and on the basis of which the Government introduced a Bill providing for practically unfettered deregulation, which does not sit well with a number of the transportation companies in our area.

Mr. Speaker, I referred to a number of trucking companies that have a problem with deregulation as proposed in the Bill. We have a group here in the riding of Saint-Maurice which in 1986 had a turnover of \$18 million, and employs 125 regular employees and 25 casual or part-time workers. Ninety-eight per cent of the company's business consists of bulk shipping and 2 per cent is general shipping. Of course the company has several other branches and one of the companies leases tractors and semitrailers, and here again 98 per cent of tractors and semitrailers are leased to the Asselin group, the name of the company involved, and 2 per cent to other firms.

As I said, the sales figures for 1986 amount to \$18 million, and one of the concerns expressed by this company during an address to the Chamber of Commerce is that the most disturbing aspect in the transport industry is deregulation as advocated by this Government. The license value will drop. The Trucking Association of Quebec asks the Government to consider compensation amounting to 1 cent a litre on fuel used by public trucking firms during the five years immediately preceding the year when the new regulation system will be implemented. This way each licensed trucker would be able to submit an annual claim of up to 20 per cent of the tax credits