

country is vast and our transportation system must adapt to what we have in 1987, and what we will have in 1990 and the year 2000.

• (2120)

The Minister of Transport, my honourable colleague and friend from St. John's West, in his usual eloquent style has said that it is important for Canadians on all the four points I have mentioned. With the cost of transportation as it is in our country, we must compete. We must have fair prices in the transportation market.

The increased competition between railways which will result from Bill C-18 will have a significant impact on the relationship between shippers and carriers. This impact has implications for the role of the regulatory agency.

Currently, all rail rates are in the public domain, and any shipper may take advantage of them. Under Bill C-18 confidential contracts will be permitted, that is, a shipper will be able to negotiate with a railway for a rate and terms of service unique to his circumstances. We have not seen that in the past. Shippers have been unjustly prejudiced because they have not had fair rates for the transportation of their products. We are addressing that problem.

This new way of doing business may in some instances lead to difficulties between the parties in reaching an agreement. To resolve any such private disputes, Bill C-18 introduces the concept of mediation and final offer arbitration. It is important that the federal Government, with 10 provinces and two Territories, says that it is willing to listen to the people who use our modes of transportation.

If a shipper and carrier are having difficulty reaching agreement on a rate or service conditions, they may jointly request a mediator from the proposed national regulatory agency. The mediator is simply a facilitator of communication between the parties. If the two parties reach a true deadlock, with or without the help of the mediator, the shipper may ask the agency to appoint an arbitrator. Arbitrators will be independent persons knowledgeable in the transportation field.

The arbitration process will be quite straightforward and speedy. That has not been the case in the past. The arbitrator will assess the parties involved and choose one or the other of them. Unless they have otherwise agreed, the parties will be bound by the result for one year.

I could go on to talk about the number of hours that we spent in the Transport Committee. I would not be fair to the committee if I did not pay tribute to its work. As the vice-chairman of the committee, I commend the work of the chairman, the Minister of Transport and the Parliamentary Secretary. To push it to the limit, I even have to mention members of the Opposition in this regard. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, we know where the NDP stand. It is against development. The Liberal Party does not know where it is. I congratulate the people who had a positive input into our committee. I can guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, and the

### *National Transportation Act, 1986*

Canadian population, if they have not already been put to sleep by the former speaker from the Liberal Party, an efficient, safe and secure transportation system for Canada under a Progressive Conservative Government.

#### *[Translation]*

**Mr. Robichaud:** Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of his speech, the Hon. Member told us that he was concerned about the regions as he is himself from Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine which could itself be called a remote region. He also tried to suggest that he is concerned about regional development.

My question is very simple. How can he explain to the people of his region that he voted against Motion No. 5 which dealt with regional development, as my motion would have provided for a mechanism to save jobs and protect our transportation system, especially in remote areas? How can he explain to his constituents that he voted against this motion which dealt with regional development?

**Mr. Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to reply to the question asked by my colleague for Westmorland—Kent.

As I mentioned earlier, if we look at Bills C-18 and C-19, we find, as the Minister himself and his predecessor have both pointed out, that the transportation system is a key to regional development.

However, Mr. Speaker, I would like to add something. I was elected in 1984 in the constituency of Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine. The situation I inherited on September 4, 1984 in the Gaspé peninsula and my own constituency of Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine included an unemployment rate of 28 per cent and the transportation network of the former Government supported by my colleague for Westmorland—Kent and others.

Within twelve months, the Progressive Conservative Government had lowered unemployment from 28 per cent to 18.4 per cent in Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine. Is that not wonderful, Mr. Speaker? It is. This was not done by myself as a Member of Parliament, but by the Government. The proof is there. We wanted change.

My hon. friend for Westmorland—Kent is saying that I am voting against regional development. His party did nothing for sixteen years. We lowered unemployment by 10 per cent and brought in a new transportation network. Indeed, the old Liberal transportation system is finished. Bills C-18 and C-19 will address the problem, and because of this, there will be regional development in the Maritimes, in Newfoundland, in Eastern Quebec and everywhere else in Canada.

**Mr. Robichaud:** I realize now the reason why, Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine voted no. He is trying to convince us an 18 per cent plus unemployment rate is acceptable.