

*Private Members' Business*

on the other hand. The casualty in that mid-air collision was Canadian passenger safety, and 24 people died in Dryden as a result of that collision.

If this is not a case of gross incompetence and negligence on the part of cabinet ministers, then I do not know what is.

**Hon. John Bosley (Don Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the previous member's speech. I thought he started particularly well and in a particularly balanced way which we have come to expect over the years from him. I was surprised, therefore, when he concluded in a way I did not expect he would conclude.

Over my years here, I have seen an evolution of this argument that somehow ministers are responsible for every paper-clip, every flight switch, every wheel blow-out and every piece of everything that happens. If a tire blows on a national highway, the Minister of Transport or his brother is personally responsible, judging by the argument of the hon. member.

He started, I thought quite appropriately by quoting the context in which the Hon. Justice's comments were put by the Hon. Justice and then took them out of that context. The context, I repeat to the hon. member, in which the Justice put his own remarks is nobody belittles in any way the consequence of 24 people losing their lives and this was and is a real tragedy. The context in which he puts his own report, remarks and suggestions, I repeat to the hon. member, the vast majority of which are either already implemented or are being examined to see if they can be implemented as quickly as possible, is that we have one of the safest air systems in the world. We continue to do so and he recognizes the incidents of air accidents since 1981 or since the beginning of regulation has not increased significantly. You can argue whether you use the 1981 to 1991 statistics which show them declining or the 1984 to 1987 statistics which show them going up slightly or the 1988 to today's statistics from the Transport Commission which show them going down since 1988.

Within that context, was this a real tragedy? Yes, it was. It is beyond me and beyond this debate which I think is about a larger principle as well and I want to come back to that. That I think was the context of the hon. member's motion, to accuse the government not of

having—as is his right if he chooses—made a mistake with regard to this report or this situation. His motion is about transportation policy in general, as I understand his motion to be, that the government has abrogated its responsibility. I will come back to that. But it is suggested somehow, as has become the Liberal Party's habit, that one should go beyond the tragedy that has happened and say it is the Minister of Transport's fault.

No, that is not what that report says. It does not say the Minister of Transport—generically the Minister of Transport—is responsible for those deaths as the member has implied. I regard that as regrettable the way in which argument has been put by members of the opposition for too many years. I do not always mean just Liberals. That is a decline in the sense of the use of this Chamber to get to better policy when we think we have to personalize everything around here. I hope the member did not mean it, but that is what he said.

I want to come back in the few minutes that are left to the motion of the member for York West. He has made quite a large allegation, that the government has somehow abandoned Canada's transportation industry. It is our view, as you would expect, and it is my view from having watched this, that the government has done a great deal to ensure not only a viable transportation system, but a safe transportation system. Safety has, as you would expect, been the top priority of the Department of Transport and it has taken a number of specific actions which reflect that commitment, not least of which is its ongoing response to the latest report.

In recent years, the government has undertaken the modernization of our air navigation system at an expense of hundreds of millions of dollars. We created the Canadian Transportation Safety Board whose job is to investigate accidents and provide recommendations to prevent future incidents in all modes, I am sure something the hon. member agrees with.

This government has passed the Railway Safety Act and amendments to the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act. We have also taken steps to introduce legislation on substance abuse in safety sensitive positions in the transport sector. There is a longer list. That is a brief example of the many initiatives taken by this government to protect the safety of Canadians using the transportation system generally in this country.