

the agreement reached between the then Minister of Transport (Mr. Otto Lang) and the Maritime Premiers after Mr. Lang submitted a draft that met the aspirations and hopes of Maritime representatives and was committed to include in the National Transportation Act, when that act would be amended, the very clause we attempted to have accepted by this Government, and that we Liberals, had we been in Government and had we put the legislation forward, would have enacted.

I must say that the Hon. Member for Westmorland—Kent did everything to convince his Conservative colleagues on the Committee on Transport to accept his amendment that met the expectations of Atlantic witnesses who appeared before us. It was a splendid fight, but unfortunately Conservative Members closed their eyes, pinched their noses and blindly followed the Minister's Parliamentary Secretary by rejecting the motion. Nobody was more embarrassed than the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Transport, the Hon. Member for Annapolis Valley—

**An Hon. Member:** —Annapolis Valley—Hants!

**Mr. Ouellet:** —Annapolis Valley—Hants (Mr. Nowlan), Mr. Speaker, who as Chairman could of course not vote, but probably was at a pain when he called the vote and saw his colleagues, especially the Hon. Member for Gaspé (Mr. Marin), the Committee Vice-Chairman, vote against such an important move to Canada's regional development. But we now realize why the Government refused that amendment. It is because the Government does not believe in regional development. As we just found out, the Minister in charge of Regional Development is being stripped of everything. Like a strip-teaser, he is stripped of one responsibility after another. Very soon he will be stark naked, without any power to look after the interests of Canadian regions. Not only is the Conservative Government rejecting an amendment that would protect regional development interests under the transportation legislation, but it is also dismantling the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion which had been set up in the best interests of Canada and specially for the prosperity of the regions of Canada. We cannot help become indignant when we see this Government destroy what was built by the Hon. Jean Marchand and created out of a deep concern for social justice to allow Canadians wherever they live to share in Canada's prosperity. And the main mandate of the regional development department is to ensure that this prosperity enjoyed by major urban centres of Canada and some wealthy areas of the country be spread around in the interest of everybody, in all regions of Canada.

I say this: the Government has rejected our amendment. That is reason enough for us to vote against Bill C-18, because a fundamental pillar of the Canadian economy is missing, that is the recognition of an economic development opportunity for all Canadians who live outside the big cities of Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton.

### *National Transportation Act, 1986*

Outside those large cities, there are people who are entitled to an opportunity to work and prosper, and we have tried to amend the legislation. The Government did not go along. We will vote against the bill because we believe it is totally unacceptable under the circumstances.

I wish to revert to the suggestion made repeatedly by the Minister of Transport to the effect that this legislation is the result of successful consultations with the provinces. Such a statement is absolutely unfounded. We know how deeply the Premiers of the Maritime provinces are disappointed and aggravated by this lack of understanding on the part of the Minister of Transport. But let me tell you a little about the reaction of the Quebec Minister of Transport on Bill C-18.

As free trade negotiations are underway between Canada and a partner which spares us no blow, what with restrictions on lumber, pork, potash, etc., how can we justifiably give free access to our railway system without any counterpart? This is what the Quebec Minister of Transport, Mr. Marc-Yvan Côté, was asking his Federal counterpart, Mr. John Crosbie, when he submitted a paper outlining the official position of the province of Quebec with respect to Bill C-18, a Bill to redraft the National Transportation Act.

We should remember that under this Bill, a shipper may enter an agreement with a company which does not serve his area, including a U.S. company, for the purpose of transporting his goods. The province of Quebec as well as several western provinces have seriously questioned the relevance of such a concession, for it is obvious that, although those shippers might benefit from it in the short term, it might have a negative impact on the economy in the long run.

The submission sent by Minister Yvan Côté to Mr. Crosbie was drafted in line with a decision of the Cabinet, and therefore represents the official position of Quebec on this matter. Here is a brief outline of some of the amendments to Bill C-18 suggested in that memorandum:

Specifying the powers of the Governor General in Council and providing for early consultations with the provinces on matters of concern to those provinces.

Extending the funding provisions for modal conversion to include the rehabilitation of lines that may be taken over by other companies.

Establishing at net salvage value the sale price of businesses and lines abandoned by a railway company when an interested party is willing to take over.

Including in the branch line grant mechanisms some form of incentive for businesses to try and upgrade their revenues and services.

Provide for the preservation of unused branch lines for five years, with a possible further delay as required.

Giving provinces which may subsidize or take over services which are about to be abandoned an assurance that they will be provided with the cost and market data of railway companies.