

Air Canada

totally disregarded. The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre said, and rightfully so, that we in Manitoba are looking at in the neighbourhood of a \$71 million deficit this year for the same reasons the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is trying to strike out the words "sound business principles, and in particular the contemplation of profit." What we are seeing is a reflection of the thinking that took place in Manitoba being reflected by the NDP here in the House of Commons.

We are generally against the proposed amendment. We will be voting for the way the bill stands at this time. We welcome the opportunity to investigate, talk with, talk at and talk about Air Canada. It has been a controversial subject in the House, certainly over the seven years I have been here. I see no reason why it will not be controversial in the future.

One area where there will be controversy with regard to Air Canada is the decision that will presumably be handed down by the Canadian Transport Commission in the not too distant future. That is on the whole question of domestic charters and the rates being charged in Canada vis-à-vis those being paid by Canadians who travel to other parts of the world. There are questions on both sides of this very important question which is attracting public attention more and more all the time. I certainly feel that the decision which will be rendered by the CTC in, presumably, a relatively short time will be a landmark decision. It will be very important, regardless of the way in which the CTC rules on the issue. Hopefully, we will have a full discussion in the House of Commons on that time.

I close by saying that Air Canada has done a reasonably good job. It appears it will do a good job in the future. I urge the members of the NDP either to vote against their House leader or have him stand up and strike his motion from the record. As I said before, it is nonsensical and has no place in this legislation.

Mr. Leonard C. Jones (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, my remarks will be very brief. For a while this afternoon I thought this was a mutual admiration society. Many fine remarks were made about the chief executive officer of Air Canada who, incidentally, is a native of my constituency. It proves that we send from the maritime provinces some of the best administrators in Canada. Possibly a maritimer should head CN as well. I do not agree with any of the remarks that have been made about CN management. It needs a really good kick to straighten it out and to bring it up to proper status.

With regard to the amendment, let there be no doubt that I am a true free enterpriser. I believe in making a profit. However, this service, Air Canada, is a public utility. It is time that governments and the people of this nation realized that railways, Air Canada and other transportation facilities should, above all, be providing service. The words in the clause of the bill which have been referred to read:

In discharging its responsibilities under this act, the board shall have due regard to sound business principles—

If it stopped there, it would accomplish what is right and proper for any Crown agency. However, it adds these words:

—and in particular the contemplation of profit.

[Mr. Murta.]

● (1652)

"Contemplation" goes further than "intent". Contemplation of a profit means more than intent to make a profit. Besides, these particular words conflict with other provisions which say that if you do not make a profit, you can go to the governor in council and maybe get a subsidy. If you have to do it the way Canadian National does it, by making application for discontinuance of service, it is pretty awful. I fear that putting in these words would only give the directors of Air Canada an excuse for further reducing the quality of air service in the maritimes, as well as increasing fares and other changes. In the maritime provinces, particularly in my constituency, scheduling and service are already very rugged; they are terrible. If you are going to Montreal, you have to get up in the middle of the night. I am talking about people who live in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick.

I repeat, I am a true enterpriser. You ask the tax collector. He knows how much money I pay to this bloody country. It is blood money, I can tell you. We praise Claude Taylor, the chief executive officer or the president of Air Canada, but he will not always be there. Maybe one day the government will get someone from another part of the country to fill that post, someone who is not so concerned about the situation in the maritimes.

Mr. Peters: They will get rid of him.

Mr. Jones: As the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) says, if he is good they will get rid of him. I urge the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) to have the courage to get up and say, "We shall delete those words about the contemplation of profit. They do not mean anything."

Mr. Hogan: We are suffering from this corporation right now in the Atlantic provinces.

Mr. Jones: It is only wise to delete those words "in contemplation of profit". Air Canada is a public utility and each of us is entitled to service from the corporation. We in the maritimes are just not getting it. We are not getting anything from the government except a hand-out here or a hand-out there. It is like Hallowe'en—trick or treat.

An hon. Member: Did you get your trick last night, or your treat?

Mr. Jones: I got both. I do not object to the word "profit". I am a free enterpriser. I do not appreciate members on the other side referring to all of us in this part of the chamber as socialists. I do not know they are all socialists in the NDP. I am not; I am a free enterpriser. I know that a buck is a buck. But I wonder whether all the members of this House know that a buck is a buck. The people of Canada do not seem to know it yet, or they do not seem to realize it.

There are other words in the bill which conflict with this proposal. The minister and others make use of a passage in the bill which sets up an obvious fiction, that you have to declare a discontinuance of service and apply for a subsidy. It makes