

National Transportation Act, 1986

competitive prices. We all know that some lessening of the regulatory grip has taken place since 1984, and that this has increased the range of air services in all regions while holding down prices, and in many cases reducing them. I am also happy to note that Canadian-built aircraft are being used for many of these new services.

I wish to give some examples of how this has helped my region. For years, residents of Atlantic Canada have rightfully complained about air services in that part of the country. These reforms will address the problem. For example, the new fall schedules for the major airlines show that Saint John, New Brunswick, will continue to benefit from economic regulatory reform. Air Canada's trial Ottawa-Montreal to Saint John service will continue. CP Air has added direct service to St. John's, Newfoundland. Air Atlantic has begun a mid-afternoon Halifax-Saint John run. There are now four mid-afternoon flights between Saint John and Halifax. In addition, Air Bras D'or is flying six days a week from Saint John to Fredericton, St. Leonard and Charlo, as well as to Digby and Halifax. Air Atlantic also operates to Fredericton and Moncton, with new generation Dash-8 equipment providing excellent quality service to these cities. Passengers who are using these services can use CP Air's seat sales and travel bonus programs. These are only the first of many improvements to come.

I wish to turn to the proposed economic reforms for railways. The National Transportation Act of 1967 constrained our railways in competing with each other. This helped no one, and it led to higher freight rates and a lessening of competition. The Government wants to give the railways a chance to compete, a chance to become efficient once again, and a chance to serve Canadians at the lowest possible price with the widest range of services. The rail proposals in the Bill will help Atlantic Canada's economy. There are better inter-switching limits, terminal running rights, competitive line rates, and confidential contracts will allow railways to optimize their use of equipment, and give users lower prices. These reforms will help Atlantic Canada get the competitive rail service it deserves. This could mean more jobs at Belledune Fertilizer, and more rail traffic from Brunswick Mining and Smelting. It will mean real rail competition for Miramichi Pulp and Paper, and all the other Atlantic Canadian companies that can use combinations of rail lines to reach their markets.

For the shippers that are unable to get a suitable price from their railroad, I am pleased to see that this legislation offers a powerful set of remedies that restore shippers' rights, and in particular will benefit the smaller, more remote shipper. Voluntary mediation will be available to help resolve disputes. Final offer arbitration will help a shipper with an unresolved complaint against a carrier's tariff gain a speedy, inexpensive end to his case. In those cases of broad public importance, a much improved public interest provision is proposed.

Shippers in Atlantic Canada will benefit from these provisions. Many shippers will be able to use both railways and will benefit from the competition between them to get a better price or better service. Others will be able to use the improved dispute resolving mechanisms to get a better deal. The greater efficiency in railroading which will result from these reforms will help all shippers in Atlantic Canada.

The Government has agreed with the provinces on a national highway safety code that will ensure that all truckers on our highways meet the same high safety standard. The Atlantic provinces will especially benefit from these reforms. By the very nature of our rail system, we have less choice of rail carriers, and have to rely on our trucking industry to give us the range of services we need. We all know that New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island are ready to proceed with provincial legislation that will free up trucking within their jurisdictions. Bill C-18 will give our region the market driven trucking industry that will help us grow and prosper.

I wish to mention that this legislation takes into consideration the regional development needs of my region. Regional development is given prominence in the policy statement of the new National Transportation Act, Section 3. This is a made-in-Canada policy, as we can all see in the special provisions for air transport in the North, the acquisitions section that puts our public interest first in takeovers, the carefully crafted railway provisions, and the staged introduction of trucking reform. The Government is committed to the ERDA programs and the maintenance of the NFRA and ARFAA programs in my region.

In closing, I wish to say that I welcome this legislation and look forward to its passage. I am convinced that it will bring significant benefits to Atlantic Canada, give a much needed boost to economic development in the region, and help create jobs.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*Translation*]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 66, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor)—Canada Post Corporation—Rural mail service—Weekly newspaper postal rates; the Hon. Member for Don Valley East (Mr. Attewell)—Banks and banking—Increases in bank service charges; the Hon. Member for Laurier (Mr. Berger)—Housing—(a) Co-operative housing—1986 statistics (b) Inquiry whether program will be amended.