

enterprise. For example, people might stop using the telephone.

● (1642)

I overstate the case, Mr. Speaker, and I do so because I want to point out what I think is the ridiculousness of having all these things which are natural monopolies, which are there for the service of the public, things which tie a country together and regarding which you do not apply the ordinary test of market profitability and competition.

Mr. Friesen: I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): The hon. member for Surrey-White Rock (Mr. Friesen) is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Friesen: Would the hon. member for Waterloo-Cambridge (Mr. Saltsman) permit a question?

Mr. Saltsman: I will always permit a question from such a distinguished member.

Mr. Friesen: The hon. member used the term "natural monopoly". In the extension of his philosophy, does not everything soon become a natural monopoly?

Mr. Saltsman: I had hoped, Mr. Speaker, that I had made my position clear. There are not that many natural monopolies, nor are there are many things which benefit from a monopoly. But I say seriously to the hon. member who has asked this question that when we are worried about running out of gas and oil, when we are worried about flying planes which are half empty from Vancouver to Toronto or Montreal, does it make sense? Does it make any sense at all to have two planes flying the same route, using twice the amount of fuel that would be required if one plane were to do that job?

Mr. Friesen: That is only Otto and Jack.

Mr. Saltsman: No, it is not only Otto and Jack. You can blame him for that so long as it is in Canada. If you want to blame the Minister of Transport for your wife's carbuncles, if she has carbuncles, or for my children's buck teeth, if they have buck teeth, fine, so long as they are living in Canada. The same kind of silliness is going on in the United States, but as powerful as the Minister of Transport may be, I do not think that he is so omnipotent that he is able to affect events in the United States.

I have heard the hon. member and other hon. members talk about the need to conserve energy because we are running out of fossil fuels. What could be more wasteful than the stupid kind of duplication which we have where several aircrafts fly the same routes, none with full loads, and all competing with each other for businessmen who are going deduct the cost of their fares from their income tax, so that the government is going to pay half anyway? Of course, politicians use the airlines, but we are no revenue producers. Although there are people who use the airlines to visit mothers, sons and daugh-

ters, the airlines really exist, like the Post Office, as a service to the businessmen of this country.

It is the businessmen of this country, with their shortsightedness and their talk of profitability, who have destroyed the transportation system, as they have destroyed the Post Office. They are always talking about the Post Office. As far as most people are concerned, Mr. Speaker, you could shut the Post Office down permanently, for all the effect it would have. But all our businessmen would never be able to collect their bills. The Post Office exists so it can distribute all these stupid circulars and bills. It is the businessmen who are the first to be critical of the Post Office. Heaven help the government if the Post Office raises the cost of postage by two cents. Businessmen will give \$2 to a private courier, but they will not give the government 14 cents to post their mail.

Mr. Friesen: You are giving us the hyperbole.

Mr. Saltsman: Yes, I am, because sometimes the hyperbole is the reality. This is the kind of silliness that goes on when talking about public effort versus private effort. As all hon. members know, I am an advocate of public ownership. I am not afraid of it. I think public ownership very useful in many ways. But neither am I an ideologist who says that public ownership is always better than private ownership, that profit is no good. I simply ask that on things like transportation, which is vital to this country, the conservation of energy and use of our resources, you keep an open mind.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I have far from exhausted what I wanted to say, and I make no pretence that I have covered everything, but we in Canada who have really pioneered public transportation, the concept of public responsibility and public involvement as a way of nation-building, are moving backwards now at a time when our neighbours to the south are realizing that we were right in the first place. They have introduced Amtrak now. They are consolidating their airlines and co-ordinating them to eliminate the wastefulness of the competitive system which exists among American airlines. But we are being regressive. We are going backwards. It is difficult to know why, except for this kind of prevailing mythology.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that if I want to do something substantial to improve the profitability of our airlines' system for the nation, we should get rid of this phony kind of competition that exists between the railroad system and the airlines. Both should be co-ordinated. A person should be able to stop off at a train station and make, not a direct connection at that point but at least a better connection to an airline or a bus than is now the case. We have a disjointed, disorganized, inefficient, unprofitable transportation system, and all because of this misguided notion that transportation is like selling soap.

Mr. Arnold Malone (Battle River): Mr. Speaker, the first thing I should like to do is to compliment you, sir, as Speaker, on staying in your chair during the last speech. I think it shows a degree of bravery on your part that I would commend you for. I listened to the hon. member for Waterloo-Cambridge (Mr. Saltsman) putting forward some of his—I was going to