

National Transportation Act, 1986

● (1520)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary does have a point but, I regret, it is debate.

[Translation]

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Hon. Member for LaSalle (Mr. Lanthier) finds my remarks concerning these incompetent Ministers of State embarrassing. In any event, should he so desire, we could exchange correspondence about this. I feel, however, that my question to the Hon. Member for Lévis (Mr. Fontaine) is quite relevant. He had said that he wanted to praise a Minister of State who had been actively involved in this matter. So, I should like to find out which one. Is it the Hon. Member for Roberval? Is it the Hon. Member for Saint-Jean or is it the Hon. Member for Rosemont? Because the Hon. Member for Saint-Jean, in particular, had indicated that he would quickly settle the Dorval-Mirabel problem.

First, the Hon. Member for St. John's West, in his capacity as Minister of Transport, indicated that he preferred Dorval; then the very same day, the Hon. Member for Saint-Jean, in his capacity as Minister of State for Transport said that he favoured Mirabel.

They met a few days later. They agreed that they both were partly right. They maintained, therefore, the *status quo* and after two years, they brought forth a solution which is a non solution. This clearly demonstrates the incompetence and short-sightedness of the members appointed to the transportation dossier. We have a Bill which is full of loopholes because five ministers—two Ministers of Transport and three Ministers of State for Transport—were responsible for it and spoiled it.

Therefore, I do not think that the Hon. Member for Lévis should praise anybody. Quite the contrary. He should be embarrassed by some of his colleagues who have been in charge of the transportation dossier in Canada.

Mr. Fontaine: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Papineau (Mr. Ouellet) is a very crafty politician. He managed to mention specific points during a few minutes. He asked me to which Minister I was referring and to which Minister I wanted to pay homage. To set the record straight, Mr. Speaker, I want to pay homage to the entire Conservative Government team which now administers a country which had been saddled with a \$200 billion debt during two decades of Liberal Government. And I want to pay homage as well to the consumers who gave us a mandate to represent them here.

Since the Hon. Member has alluded to the positions of the Ministers of Transport, I take the liberty of quoting from a speech delivered by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) on January 29, 1976. The Hon. Member does not want to say where he stands, he does not want to protect us and help us with this legislation. This was in 1984.

At the time, Mr. Speaker, I realized there was a serious problem with our transport system, particularly with respect to the rigidity of decisions and regulations.

And there is more. Listen, Mr. Speaker, and Canadians as well should listen to this sentence uttered by a former Minister of the Liberal team:

There is no competition likely to help consumers and producers.

Have you ever heard such a socialistic message, Mr. Speaker? I will repeat this for the edification of the Hon. Member for Papineau (Mr. Ouellet).

There is no competition likely to help consumers and producers.

This is just another way of saying that our system should ignore competition, that we should get rid of our private enterprise system. Is this the ideology of the Liberals, the kind of principles which translated into a \$240 billion debt as a result of the distribution of somebody else's wealth?

Mr. Lanthier: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Hon. Member for Lévis (Mr. Fontaine).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary for the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Lanthier) has the floor.

Mr. Lanthier: Mr. Speaker, being in the service of the people of LaSalle who travel in great numbers to Ottawa by train, I am concerned about the fact that some railway companies have expressed an intention to cancel some lines. However, since that railway between LaSalle and Ottawa will be useful to me for some 20 more years, I would appreciate if he could give us the assurance here that the Government has taken every step in the Bill under consideration to preserve those railways which are presently in operation.

Mr. Fontaine: I thank the Hon. Member for LaSalle for his question. Mr. Speaker, in the present legislative context, one thing remains unchanged for Canadians, something which in fact was achieved as a result of a project of a Conservative Government and completed in 1886, and that is the Halifax to Vancouver railway. The author of that achievement was Prime Minister Macdonald, an eminent Member of the Conservative Party, as we are indeed, Mr. Speaker. That is a fact, and that railway will remain in operation. All other railways in the country may be reviewed to ascertain the relevance of their costs before the money is spent, something which our predecessors never bothered to do, Mr. Speaker.

● (1530)

[English]

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. gentleman a question. Early in his remarks he mentioned a trucking association about whose existence I am not aware, unless I misunderstood him. Representatives of the Canadian Trucking Association have met with me, and I have met with a number of people from large, medium and small trucking companies, all of whom have expressed their dismay and fright at this legislation. Could the Hon. Member inform the House which association he was talking about? Where is its head office? Who are the members of it and how many of them are there? Could he provide all of us or some of us with a copy of what it is they had to say?