

Air Canada

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I am sure I have the right to say a couple of words in response to the misleading statement of the hon. member for Lisgar.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Nystrom: I was only quoting a reputable journalist from the Regina *Leader-Post* named Fred Harrison, who had called the office of the Leader of the Opposition, who did not deny the statement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Would the hon. member resume his seat? What the hon. member is doing is to prove again that the Chair was right and that the point raised was just a point of debate, not a point of order, something which the Chair did not accept. It is certain therefore that I cannot accept another point of order which is an argument.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): It is a draw.

Mr. Bob Brisco (Kootenay West): It is unfortunate that in dealing with this bill, instead of addressing themselves to it, the NDP have tended to launch into an ideological diatribe, beating their political drum for all its worth. I would respectfully draw to the attention of the NDP the particular passage over which they expressed so much concern, that is, that the board shall have due regard to sound business principles. This is not the complete quote, but there was genuine reason for concern on the part of the NDP with reference to sound business principles.

I can understand the NDP having difficulty with sound business principles, and I really appreciate their dilemma. Certainly the history of the NDP in British Columbia would indicate that they had a great many problems with sound business principles, but if they look at the clause which gives them so much difficulty and realize that the contemplation of profit is only there as a reference—it is not said there that Air Canada must make a profit, a word which sticks in their throats, they gag on the word “profit”—they would understand it better.

To put this ideological argument to rest, to put the whole thing in its proper perspective, let us quote one of their authorities. I am referring to the backroom mastermind of three Ontario election campaigns of the NDP. The man in question is Mr. Gerald Caplan. What does he have to say about the economic problems of the party he represents? He says:

That lurking fear among potential supporters that we've never met a payroll, that we simply don't know how to run this store . . .

David Lewis, the former leader of the NDP, said the following:

One of the real deficiencies in my own leadership was that I was never able to clarify adequately the NDP's proficiency with the economy.

● (2152)

I would be quite prepared to address myself entirely to this bill, but I think first we have to look at it in the perspective of

the arguments which have been presented by my friends on my left. Mr. Caplan went on to say that the NDP failed to increase its vote because it did not prove itself responsible on economic matters. The red herring of garbage collection was raised here. I fail to see any similarity between garbage collection and Air Canada, and I am sure Air Canada would not appreciate that reference.

If we are going to get involved with whether a particular telephone company makes a profit or whether it is a Crown corporation, I suggest to my colleagues on my left both physically and politically that they examine the record of B.C. Hydro. If they think that Air Canada has a problem making a profit, perhaps they should examine British Columbia Hydro. After all, I notice in the guide which gives us a background and a history of all members of parliament, one member who used to serve the riding of Kootenay West and who said, “These accomplishments,” referring to the accomplishments of his party, “include forcing the B.C. government to take over Hydro facilities”. How the citizens of British Columbia have rued that day, and speakers from that particular party have expressed that same concern since then.

In Kootenay West there is a small utility company called West Kootenay Power. It is one of those nasty corporate companies which makes a profit. That company services the Kootenays, part of the Okanagan and right through to Princeton. The people of those areas will have nothing to do with B.C. Hydro. Why? Because West Kootenay Power, while it operates at a profit, has utility rates at least one quarter lower than those established by that giant, B.C. Hydro.

Mr. Hogan: Which government nationalized Ontario Hydro? It was a Progressive Conservative government.

Mr. Brisco: You will have your turn, brother.

Mr. Haidasz: It's “Father”.

Mr. Brisco: I did not realize that he was promoted to a father. I hope it will not be long before he is canonized.

Mr. Hogan: Cheap shot there, boy.

Mr. Brisco: By its rates and by the inflated salaries it has paid to linemen and other hydro workers, B.C. Hydro has robbed utility companies of valued employees right across this country. Utility companies simply cannot compete with the wages which are paid by B.C. Hydro.

That is getting far and a way from this bill, but if the members of the NDP are going to bring in red herrings, then I feel responsible to respond to them. They have said that public transportation should never make a profit and that it is there to serve the public. Certainly public transportation is there to serve the public. I do not argue that point, and I do not suggest that in remote areas it will make a profit. However, a clause in this bill says that sound business principles have to be considered. Is there something wrong with that?

Is there some new economic policy of the NDP which would employ other than sound principles? They wail and moan