

I wanted to list the various chapters of this report, Mr. Speaker, to demonstrate the extent of this study which should have been consulted by the Minister responsible for Bill C-18, a legislation aimed at de-regulating the transportation industry.

Chapter VIII of our *Obstacles* report dealt entirely with the problems associated with the transportation of handicapped in Canada. Here is what Elizabeth Semkiw, from Winnipeg, said:

Transportation, or rather the accessibility or lack of transportation, has always been the most serious problem handicapped people have had to face.

Getting to the doctor, to work, or, on very rare occasions, to recreational activities has always been a major obstacle and a source of considerable difficulty and expenditure for the handicapped who, like myself, cannot move around without assistance in an ordinary vehicle.

Then, there is what the Canadian Rehabilitation Council for the handicapped has to say.

Since the invention of the wheel, humanity has always worked at improving its means of transport. High technology gives more freedom to the non-handicapped and facilitates their movements in their own neighbourhood and beyond. However, for the handicapped, transport still is a major obstacle to equality, participation and integration.

I remind the House that the theme of the International Year of the Handicapped in 1981 was equality, participation and integration plans. How can our handicapped in Canada hope to achieve full participation and integration if they cannot travel with dignity inside their own country? Our fundamental recommendation on which all the others were based was as follows. Before making any change to any Canadian law, the Government must always consult the handicapped about programs and policies which directly affect them.

It is very disappointing, Mr. Speaker, to see that the Government did not consult the handicapped in preparing this Bill. If the handicapped had been consulted and listened to, Bill C-18 would be very different. For instance, it would ensure reasonable access to all modes of transport under federal jurisdiction for the handicapped. The Minister of Transport should have developed a national policy on transport for the handicapped before introducing the Bill. As we know, several means of transport come directly under federal jurisdiction, such as air carriers, interprovincial railway services, interprovincial bus services, international and interprovincial ferries and the road cruiser service in Newfoundland.

Had the Government adopted a national transportation policy for the handicapped, the major air, rail and water terminals would be decently accessible to them, especially with respect to washrooms, wickets, baggage registration, restaurants, telephones and drinking fountains, as well as the audio and visual communication and information systems. There are still too many terminals across the land where those essential services are not available, and the Minister of Transport should publish without further ado a scheduling of the projects he intends to implement to ensure reasonable accessibility for handicapped travellers. "Accessibility" means that the person may get aboard and take his or her seat without help. This is too bad, and I regret that the Minister did not take this

### *National Transportation Act, 1986*

opportunity when tabling the Bill to make transportation more accessible to the handicapped.

Mr. Speaker, Bill C-18 now before the House, the National Transportation Act, 1986 is a clumsy and incomplete application of the deregulation principle. It is an application copied from the American experience. I have just shown how the Bill has completely ignored accessibility, comfort, safety and rates for the Canadian handicapped. With this in mind, I will ask the House the following question: If the Canadian Government fails to take heed of ensuring accessibility and safety to the Canadian handicapped, is it realistic to believe an American firm will? This legislation brings in long awaited changes on which we are partly in agreement, but as concerns the handicapped, there are still too many shortcomings and deficiencies.

Hopefully, Mr. Speaker, we will have an opportunity to introduce amendments during the parliamentary committee study and, above all, the Minister will look favourably upon them. So I intend to vote against this Bill, Mr. Speaker, but I will support the amendment aimed at withdrawing it and referring the subject-matter to the Standing Committee on Transport.

• (1230)

[English]

**Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill C-18, and the motion, which I support, to send it back to committee so that people who have expressed an interest in having input can do so before it is drafted instead of after the direction is set by the Government.

This Bill is a virtual word-for-word repeat of a Bill which failed in the last Parliament, Bill C-126. We see with this Bill an introduction of an Act by a Progressive Conservative Government to, what it calls, "deregulate" the transportation industry. That is the same Party which appeared to be opposed to the killing of the Crow rate because western Canadians understood what killing the Crow would do to their region. Now the Conservatives have done a complete flip-flop and decided that all transportation matters should be completely deregulated.

What does that mean for a region like western Canada? It means there will no longer be rights to service by rail. The process of getting rid of branchlines will continue at an even faster pace under this Government than happened under the Liberals. Western Canadians will recall that the Liberals closed down some 2,500 branchlines in the course of their mandate. There are about 3,000 that the Conservative Government is proposing to get rid of in its mandate. This is the same Government that on the hustings claimed to be the protectors of farmers' rights to maintain those branch lines and the rights of their communities to have access to the rail system.

What regulation is all about is the right of communities to have access to service. We have used the system of regulation