

Air Canada

provide services to the far North or to ensure there is a cross subsidization between the very lucrative Montreal-Ottawa-Toronto triangle and some of the smaller outlying region, there is a need to say to the Board of Directors of Air Canada that the bottom line cannot be their only consideration. Service has to be there not only to the major centres, to which many business people travel, but also to the Thunder Bays, the Sault Ste. Maries, the Sudburys of Ontario and elsewhere. The test of public convenience and necessity, which was there prior to deregulation, required an airline by regulation to provide a certain level of service. Perhaps it is a service beyond the economic capabilities of the community. We have seen in northwestern Ontario Dryden which has lost its jet service, a service it had for a number of years, a service very important to the economy of that part of northwestern Ontario.

Mr. Orlikow: Brandon too.

Mr. Angus: It was a symbol of being part of the mainstream. It is down to NorOntAir, Air Ontario and a Canadian partner, the very small lines. Dryden does not feel the same kind of attachment it had before. My colleague reminds me that Brandon used to be on a route connecting through Thunder Bay which provided jet service which has been taken away.

There are some economic impacts that go beyond whether or not a company makes a profit. While obviously we do not want to see government corporations losing money, we think it makes sense to force them to make it their mandate to provide those kinds of services. Through deregulation and privatization we have lost the tools we once had to ensure there is that kind of service.

There is another area we were concerned about. Under a policy direction, Air Canada has certain responsibilities with respect to the Official Languages Act to ensure the appropriate mix of our two official languages across the country. There is concern that as a private sector company there would not be the same pressure or controls. We want to ensure that the Commissioner of Official Languages is able to continue the monitoring process and what is still our national airline will provide service in both languages that we have come to accept as appropriate.

My Party and those we represent are concerned about privatization. We see it being done not for sound economic reasons, but more to satisfy a certain philosophical approach that is represented by the Conservative Party.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa—Carleton): Which is sound.

Mr. Angus: We have seen Air Canada allowed to operate more and more as a private sector company without the benefit of legislation. We have not as taxpayers had to provide any money to Air Canada for many, many years. It has been self-sufficient, which is the goal of any Crown corporation, as long as it continued to provide services. We know from the documents available that the share assets of Air Canada provided by the Government of Canada have not been drawn upon.

Money is available allowing Air Canada to refurbish its fleet. There are all sorts of exciting and innovative ways of acquiring equipment that are not capital intensive and could have been utilized to ensure that Air Canada was able to grow appropriately. Yes, it would have cost money, but it would have cost a lot less than eight or ten nuclear submarines.

It is important as a symbol that we have an airline that is ours, not some small group or an individual or two. Air Canada belongs to all of us, every taxpayer today, and those yet to be born. We are the owners. This great movement to privatize Air Canada is not giving it or selling it to the people, it is selling Air Canada to a select few, taking it out of the control of the many through their elected representatives and giving it to a small section of our population and to people outside of our country. I do not think that is right, Mr. Speaker. I do not think that is an appropriate policy direction for the Government of Canada to take. That is why I and my colleagues will be voting against this Bill as we did at second reading.

We attempted to make the changes in committee and at report stage to make the Bill a little better. None of the amendments were accepted, even though I think they were appropriate safeguards that even the government Members should have considered more seriously. I think, because changes were coming from the NDP, Tory Members say, "Whatever the NDP wants is wrong and we will ram the Bill through in any case". That is not the appropriate way to do things.

There are no guarantees for the workers, no collective agreement job security clause. The guarantee for maintenance bases is weak, and other employees such as ticket agents and aircrew are not included. Flight attendants, who traditionally have had a number of bases in Canada from which to work, are not protected. Air Canada is being privatized with an eye on the bottom line. Air Canada could easily say to those people who live in western and Atlantic Canada, "Sorry we are not making as much money this year as we would like to. We will have to centralize and you will have to locate in Toronto and Montreal. You will have to leave your home in Winnipeg or Vancouver because it is more cost efficient to have you coming out of the major hub". Then there is the possibility of greater and greater foreign control. You have a situation developing of a privately operated airport terminal in Toronto. What happens if the company involved in that becomes attached to one of the American companies? What are the ramifications?

It would be nice if the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) would phone us and tell us he has been elsewhere in his community, has spoken to the Governor General and will call an election so we can kill this Bill as well as the trade Bill. Then we can get rid of the Government that should not have been elected in the first place.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa—Carleton): You are history.