

• (1740)

In conclusion, let me say that I find it remarkable that research indicates that by banning smoking on the job, not only are health hazards avoided but \$5,000 per employee can be saved within three to five years of implementing such a policy. The savings to employers come from lower accident and fire insurance premiums, reduced routine maintenance costs, reduced absenteeism and lower mortality rates among employees. Surveys show that smokers take 50 per cent more sick leave than non-smokers. Mortality rates for smokers in the peak working years of age 30 to 35 are four to seven times higher than that for non-smokers. These are alarming statistics. That is why I feel this action is so needed.

The Government has begun to take some action on this issue and we have before us another Bill along the same line. Whether the spokesperson is from the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party or the New Democratic Party is not the issue. The issue is that this House as a result of the reforms can finally come to grips with something. We can leave our Party labels aside and start to address an issue, as our electors sent us here to do. I commend the Hon. Member for her Bill and hope it ends up being passed.

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Calgary South): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address the problems and benefits associated with applying a law such as Bill C-204 to means of transport and transportation terminals, especially where such facilities are also workplaces. The proposed legislation seeks to accommodate within reason both smokers and non-smokers who are employees in the federal Public Service as well as users of federally regulated means of transport.

In the transportation sector, as in other sectors, employees providing a direct service to the public share their workplace with the public, and in locations such as large airport terminals and railway stations, with private users of the facility such as restaurateurs, shopkeepers, advertisers, repairmen and, of course, passengers, none of whom may be subject to federal regulation. In these circumstances, it is hard to see how legislation such as Bill C-204 could be successfully enforced.

Ms. McDonald: They all need to breathe.

Mrs. Sparrow: Furthermore, a brief review of attempts to create a smoke-free environment in the transportation sector suggests that legislation might not be required and might, in some cases, prove to be counter-productive.

In 1984, Transport Canada and Health and Welfare Canada examined the issue of smoking in transit, in consultation, of course, with the provinces, the carriers and public interest groups. The consensus appeared to be that while legislative restrictions might be desirable, they should be examined from a practical point of view. Since then a number of initiatives have been investigated and I shall deal with them individually.

Non-Smokers' Health Act

At the beginning of September, VIA Rail introduced non-smoking facilities in all except four of the corridor services. Each train now has one car for the exclusive use of non-smokers—

Ms. McDonald: And no space at the stations.

Mrs. Sparrow:—and the remaining cars will have 70 per cent non-smoking and 30 per cent smoking areas. These percentages represent the demands and preferences for seats—

Ms. McDonald: It is not non-smoking if you are in the same enclosed space.

Mrs. Sparrow:—by VIA Rail's customers as shown in their reservation patterns. Computer services are not, of course, a federal responsibility. However, it is worth noting that in Toronto, a smoke ban on all rolling stock has existed for 20 years. This year it was extended to include smoking in all enclosures and bus shelters. In Montreal smoking is banned on all rolling stock but not in shelters or on platforms.

Intercity bus service also falls under provincial jurisdiction, but federal-provincial negotiations are now taking place for the implementation of non-smoking services. The question of enforcement presents some problems which are now being discussed. However, some large bus companies have already undertaken some initiatives, including provision of completely non-smoking buses. Generally, surface carriers are very supportive and active with respect to providing non-smoking facilities. They are responding to the new trends and demands for non-smoking services which now exist in their respective markets—

Ms. McDonald: But far too slowly.

Mrs. Sparrow:—as a simple matter of business planning and strategic marketing devices.

In view of the efforts already undertaken by these carriers, a major federal policy initiative or statement would likely be considered by the operators as unnecessary—

Ms. McDonald: Talk to the customers who are suffering in smoke-filled areas.

Mrs. Sparrow:—and given the lack of federal jurisdiction in most surface areas, might dampen or even diminish the current atmosphere of co-operation.

Mr. Parry: Surely you jest.

Ms. McDonald: Co-operation? It's a question of health.

Mrs. Sparrow: As far as aeroplanes are concerned, I think everyone is familiar—

Ms. McDonald: You want to co-operate with lung cancer?

Some Hon. Members: Order.