

strategy, priority or labour practices they see fit to manage and administer transferred airports.

There is no guarantee that service at Edmonton, Calgary, Montreal or Vancouver would be maintained or enhanced as a result of the transfer. There is no provision in the bill for the sharing of expertise, knowledge and experience between Transport Canada employees who have that expertise and the local authorities to ensure the retention of those standards.

Finally, I want to say that certainly the opportunity for local authorities opens up some possibilities for better, more locally sensitive service. It also opens up or the risk that local communities will end up carrying a financial burden that this government no longer wants to assume to provide what is in essence a portion of a national service.

The legislation must protect local property taxpayers from a regressive tax, one not based on people's ability to pay from assuming down the line a financial burden that should be shared equally by taxpayers, the private sector and the Government of Canada as a national service.

I want to just quote from some statements that were made by Gordon Sinclair, president of Canadian Air Transport Association of Canada before the Royal Commission on Transportation and Passenger Travel Services. He was speaking about the privatization of Terminals 1, 2 and 3 at Toronto.

What he said was that developers are skimming the cream of profit off the top of airport operations, that the air carriers in this country do not want a repeat of Terminal 3 elsewhere in Canada. This is a contract that was decided on who derives the greatest revenue to Transport Canada and not what was best for the transportation industry or the travelling public.

This bill has a lot of flaws in it. I hope that the government is amenable to improving the bill so that hopefully, if it proceeds with this, it can be done in a way that will be most helpful to air transportation in Canada.

Government Orders

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, the minister has been overwhelmed by the presentation and asks, "not more harbours". I was going to give him a bit of relief here.

An hon. member: Comic relief.

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): No, it is not comic relief. I was going to say that the minister is not known far and wide as an ogre and a heartless individual. I have known him for 10 years. He is a gentleman and a scholar, a man in whom great trust can be put.

• (1820)

There is one thing that surprises me. I wonder if the member for Ottawa West might care to explain to the House how one can shift and change. The project before us today was really conjured up by the member for Winnipeg South Centre. This was debated in the House when your party was government. It is ironic that today, when this could have been nipped in the bud years ago, if it is such an unsavoury and unwholesome activity, why the devil would your party have been the proponents of the idea? Perhaps she could explain why the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre stood in this same House, making the same arguments that the hon. Minister of Transport is making. I know my colleague is not an ogre and a heartless individual. As the perpetrator, he is simply carrying out the wishes of the Liberal member for Winnipeg South Centre. Could she elucidate on that?

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I recognize that there are some people who have been around here longer than I have and who are growing perhaps a little long in the tooth. I can only assume that when they persist on harking back nostalgically to what happened 8, 10 or 15 years ago. I understand that is what happens when one lives on the sunshine coast, the ability to focus and concentrate on what is happening in the House is a bit difficult. I go there myself when I want to escape.

I also find it slightly anomalous that it is the New Democratic Party which is taking us back in history and refusing to recognize that this is many years later, and perhaps issues need to be dealt with in a different way than they were back in those days.

The bill before us clearly has many flaws and faults in it. We would like to see those flaws and faults corrected.