

Government came to power. It has been underfunded in terms of staff at all levels, whether it be in terms of inspectors on the ground looking at safety or whether it be with respect to commissioners and others who have to rule on these types of matters.

In conclusion, in my judgment the solution is not to create a system whereby the pulp and paper will be hauled over American railway lines. If that is the Tory solution, then they can have it. There have to be more creative ways of dealing with the problem than allowing our goods and services to be handled by American railways.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The time allotted for questions and comments has terminated. The Hon. Member for Fundy—Royal (Mr. Corbett) on debate.

**Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy—Royal):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my pleasure in being able to debate Bill C-18 today in the House of Commons. I would like to say at the outset that I am much more optimistic about the positive ramifications and benefits that this Bill will have than is the previous speaker. Although I am not surprised, I am disappointed that, indeed, true to tradition, the socialists of the country are knocking the premise of free enterprise and suggesting that indeed we should go for more regulation rather than deregulation.

Today is one of the truly important moments in Canada's history and in the history of transportation in the country. Today, we are debating second reading of a new National Transportation Act and a new Motor Vehicle Transport Act. These Bills are the most fundamental and progressive reforms in transportation legislation that Canada has seen for a good many years.

Two years ago, in the fall of 1984, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) tabled the *Agenda for Economic Recovery*, the Government's plan for economic renewal, in the House of Commons. An important element of this policy was the return of economic initiative to the private sector and the reduction of government interference and regulation in the business affairs of Canadians.

In July of 1985 the Government put before Parliament the position paper *Freedom to Move*. It was a carefully thought-out program for the reform of economic regulation of transportation, joined with a reduction in the level of government interference in transportation economic matters.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1985 discussions took place in all parts of the Canadian community with transportation companies, with provinces and with users of transport services—business people, shippers and travellers.

Last fall, the Standing Committee on Transport considered and held hearings on the policy proposals set out in the document *Freedom to Move*. The committee's recommendations were important in shaping the legislation which is currently before the House.

### *National Transportation Act, 1986*

These Bills are among the most forward-looking and reform-minded legislation I have seen in some time before the House for consideration. They represent the following broad principles. Less regulation and less interference in transportation, which will lead to greater economic growth in all of Canada's regions. Greater reliance on competition and market forces, which will result in lower transportation costs and the services people want, rather than those dictated to them from afar. Users of the transportation system, both shippers and travellers, want a regulatory system that is open, accessible, just, and dedicated to competition and service. I suggest to my hon. friends opposite that those are the cornerstones and the milestones of this entire Act. They are the foundation.

• (1600)

It is of special importance to me, as a Member from Atlantic Canada, to know that this reform will bring benefits to the less advantaged areas of the country, as it will to central Canada. Let me assure you, Mr. Speaker, that it does address that.

Some have tried to make the case that excessive regulation promotes regional development. Nothing could be further from the truth. For too long, Atlantic Canada has paid too high a price for a transportation regulatory system that protects privilege and stifles development. Our growth will best be served by a competitive transportation system that is efficient, and offers the widest range of services at the least cost. We are located far from markets and need the lowest costs possible. We need the type of innovative marketing that a competitive system brings, not rigid regulation. We need services that suit our special needs, not those operated to arbitrary standards set in Ottawa. In short, we in Atlantic Canada need the benefits of competition.

Over the last 20 years, the rapid change in the transportation system has convinced me that the unreasonable economic regulation of carriers, and the counterproductive effect this has had on users, has gone on far too long. The reforms this Bill proposes for Canadian air services are wide-reaching and important. Under the new reform legislation, domestic air carriers can offer services and prices as they see fit, and as the market demands. This will lead to a wider range of less costly services to our citizens. The public will be protected from abrupt cessation of service by a 60-day notice period, and subsidies to preserve essential services. Unreasonable fare increases can also be disallowed or turned back.

This legislation does address the concerns and needs of Atlantic Canada. This Bill will greatly reduce stifling economic regulations. We all know that the Government is committed to air safety, and as other hon. colleagues have already said, safety is the first priority. I am happy to say that steps are already under way to enhance air, rail, truck and marine safety by hiring more inspectors, improving standards, and making legislative safety reforms.

I am convinced that these air transportation reforms will foster a wider range of services in Atlantic Canada at more