

the most devious Minister of Transport that I have seen in the House in the last 15 years. The tragedy is that he is using the transportation system as a political vehicle to help save his own political hide and the hide of the Liberal Government.

Mr. Axworthy: That is the nicest thing you have ever said about me.

Mr. Foster: Ask him if he is running for the leadership of the P.C. Party in Alberta.

Mr. Mazankowski: I know that the Minister is somewhat perturbed and annoyed over the fact that he would rather be campaigning for his friend, John Turner, than defending his stewardship here today in the House of Commons. But he has responsibilities in the House and he must account for his actions and inactions, and we regret that very much.

In any event, he has not put the best interests of the Canadian people and the best interests of the transportation industry ahead of his own political motivations and the political motivations of his Party.

In this motion we are trying to expose and document that evidence. Throughout the course of this debate I hope that we will be able to demonstrate the examples of his hypocrisy, contradiction, inconsistencies and, yes, even his incompetence and lack of credibility, because he has been carrying on in a rather reckless manner.

Let me begin by referring to a statement that he made last Saturday when he spoke to the Transport 2000 meeting in Toronto. This is what he said—

Mr. Axworthy: They gave me a standing ovation.

Mr. Mazankowski: Yes, very interesting. More deceit, manipulation and ballyhoo.

Mr. Axworthy: When is the last time you had one?

Mr. Mazankowski: Every weekend when I go home I get a standing ovation.

I am quoting from the *Ottawa Citizen* as follows:

Any overhaul of passenger rail service in Canada should address the needs of the traveller first and the railways second, Transport Minister Lloyd Axworthy said Saturday.

The article goes on to say:

He also said decisions to close community rail lines or make other changes in service cannot be 'dictated from on high.' Those affected should have a say.

What ballyhoo! What hypocrisy! I say to the Minister, "Glory Alleluia". But who can believe him? It was the same Minister who stoutly defended the unilateral cut-back of 20 per cent of the rail passenger service in 1981. I might say that this was done without public hearings, without public input and without even a reference to a parliamentary debate. And in that, some 3,000 to 4,000 Canadians lost their jobs directly and indirectly and service was dismantled for 1.2 million Canadians. There were horrific losses in tourist revenue. They have been estimated to be at \$40 million annually, \$10 million annually for the community of Jasper. That Minister was the

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key person and crucial in the decision-making process. It appears that the former Minister is going to defend him.

Mr. Pepin: I am defending myself. I made these decisions.

Mr. Mazankowski: My intelligence tells me that the current Minister wanted to see a cut-back of 50 per cent of the rail passenger service. He was serving on three crucial Cabinet committees which rendered this decision. He was a member of the Committee on Economic and Regional Development. He was the Chairman of the Western Affairs Cabinet Committee. Incidentally, the west lost 50 per cent of the rail passenger service under that cut-back. He was a member of the powerful Priorities and Planning Committee.

He is now promenading around the country as a white knight in shining armour promising that he will restore rail passenger service. He is pledging now to listen to the public. What balderdash! What phony, political backtracking. That is all that it can be called. If one ever wanted to see a classic manipulation of words and actions, the Minister is the champion at it.

Let us look at some specifics. In his musings, he said that there would be new equipment by 1986. Mr. Pierre Franche came before the committee and said that we will be lucky to have a prototype by 1989. So much for that!

Mr. Axworthy: Who do you believe?

Mr. Mazankowski: On the record of the Minister, we certainly do not believe him.

Mr. Axworthy: I run my Department.

Mr. Mazankowski: He even recognizes that he is in trouble. The Vancouver service—

Mr. Axworthy: Where were you for nine months? What were you doing?

Mr. Mazankowski: I will defend my record against yours any day, any day at all.

Mr. Axworthy: Nine months of a big zero.

Mr. Mazankowski: What about the Vancouver service? He said he will put in the service to Vancouver. But Pierre Franche said that it is getting only cursory attention. The Minister goes to Edmonton to hold hands with Mayor Decore and have a few photo opportunities. He says that he will put that service back.

What about the service from Moncton to Edmundston? There were no conditions in the announcement. He said that in the fall of 1984 service would be restored to Moncton and Edmundston. He is now saying it will be restored for a two-year trial period.

The VIA Rail promises are indeed a sham. If the Minister is going to put people first, before the trains, then let him move now to restore the rail passenger service to Jasper and Vancouver. Let him move now to restore the Atlantic service and to