

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, I was intrigued by the comments of the Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn). I suggest they typify the Government's philosophy and objectives. One would have thought that the conservative revolution in North America has reached its end and is beginning to decline. However, when one considers this legislation and the comments made by the Hon. Member for Mississauga South and other Conservative Members, one finds that that ideology is certainly strong in their hearts.

Canadian public opinion and public opinion elsewhere in the world has moved beyond these philosophies, and it is not surprising to see the Government so low in the polls as it continues to hold on to these philosophies which, as Canadians are beginning to realize, are outdated.

It is obvious from listening to the Hon. Member for Mississauga South that he is a typical free enterpriser from the old school, before there were laws controlling pollution, child labour or industry in any way at all. He, like other Conservative Members, is advocating an uninhibited free enterprise environment where anything goes. They believe in ignoring public interest and allowing our transportation system to operate in any way that makes a profit or helps to achieve a profit. The Hon. Member says "correct".

Of course, when considering the Hon. Member's ideology, one must also consider that he comes from the Toronto area where he will not face problems in a deregulated regime. The airlines will not be after his business and he will always have the benefit of seat sales and so on.

However, the Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson) knows that people from Weyburn, Saskatchewan and other areas in his riding will have greater difficulty in getting the benefit of seat sales because Regina is not as important. While we had difficulties in getting seat sales in Regina in the past, we were able to get some concessions from the major airlines because we live in a deregulated environment in which airlines are supposed to treat Canadians equally, whether they live in a small city like Regina or a larger city like Toronto.

The Hon. Member for Mississauga South does not like that and would rather see people in Toronto, Montreal and other major centres receive all the benefits, while people from smaller cities like Saskatoon and Regina receive no benefits whatsoever. I am surprised that the Member for Assiniboia would even agree with this legislation. He is certainly not acting in the best interests of his constituents and the people surrounding Regina and other smaller cities in Saskatchewan.

It does not make sense that the Government would put forward legislation that would deregulate transportation in this country and allow a dog-eat-dog environment to prevail. Canada has been united despite its vast geography and immense difference in terrain. Our population is scattered,

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with small communities throughout the country and larger concentrations of population in larger centres. There has been a commitment in Canada, whether there has been a Conservative or a Liberal Government in Ottawa, to provide equality in the treatment of Canadians from coast to coast. Whether Canadians live in smaller or larger communities, they will have the same benefits. However, that will certainly be changed as a result of this Bill.

This Bill also raises the question of variable rates, which is another reflection of the Conservative Government philosophy. The railways want variable rates because it would give them the opportunity to offer lower rates to certain communities and charge higher rates in other regions. Of course, that would encourage trucking because it is cheaper to the railways if farmers truck their grains from the mills to central points which the railways service. Grain farmers in the West will know the consequences of variable rates. Hundreds of miles of rural rail lines will be abandoned, which will mean the end of many smaller towns. It will mean the concentration of resources and facilities in a handful of communities throughout the western prairie region.

Those of us who believe that our country must consist of widespread viable smaller communities have consistently opposed the notion of variable rates. This legislation would allow variable rates in trucking, rail, and air transportation. That is why we cannot agree with it. Our Party agrees that many of the regulations that exist today are outmoded and should be changed through an ongoing process, but the basic philosophy of cross-subsidization should remain in place. Those routes that are profitable, whether in rail, trucking or air transportation, should subsidize and support those routes that are not so profitable. That is how all Canadians can benefit from a modern, efficient transportation system to which all can have access. We do not believe there should be first and second class citizens in this country. Therefore, my colleagues and I are opposed to this legislation.

I am also concerned about safety. I believe I have one minute remaining, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I believe the Hon. Member's time has expired.

Mr. Barry Turner (Ottawa—Carleton): Mr. Speaker, in the last few days and weeks we have talked about this Bill at length. We well realize that there is a question of representation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret to inform the Hon. Member that it is five o'clock. It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.