

Mr. McMillan: Order!

Mr. Hovdebo:—which encourages a north-south flow rather than an east-west flow for the movement of goods. It will be much easier for goods to be moved into the United States in certain circumstances. That is probably the largest attack on Canadian unification and sovereignty.

What the Government is doing here today is changing Canada's transportation policy by eliminating this airline by privatization. It is another attack on the unification policy. We know, as Members of the Government know, that Crown corporations were put in place for public policy purposes. When the Minister responsible for privatization said that the Government was talking about selling Crown corporations, she gave several basic reasons under which circumstances Crown corporations could be sold. As it happens, the sale of Air Canada does not fulfil any of the requirements that were articulated by the Minister responsible for privatization. I would like to cover those arguments a little later in my remarks.

However, I know that members of the Government are going to tell us, or have told us already, that this will still be a national airline, whether it is privately owned or publicly owned. They will tell us that it does not make any difference. But for how long will it be a national airline? I know that members of the Government will tell us that the articles under which it will be incorporated will indicate that it must keep bases in places such as Winnipeg and Montreal. However, does anyone think that when the power of the shareholders of the airline move from Canada, or move to a different part of Canada, that there will be any reason to keep a maintenance station open in Winnipeg to service but one plane a year? That will not necessarily keep that place open or keep the people working in that particular community.

The philosophy and ideology of the Party in power at the present time, the Party which forms the Government, is aimed at integration with the United States. The trade deal acclaims that. The Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie) has been acclaiming that since he fought the joining of Newfoundland to Canada. He ran his campaign in Newfoundland at the time saying: "We should not join Canada, we should join the United States". He is still at it.

Deregulation gives American multinationals a definite edge in the Canadian economy. That has been part of the policy of this Government and the previous Government. These movements toward integration of the Canadian economy with that of the American economy seem to be part of a very deliberate move on the part of the Government. It includes deregulation, privatization and free trade. It includes a group of policies which will make Canada much more dependent upon the United States and much less effectively a solid unit that we are proud of today.

It is quite possible that the control of Air Canada will eventually go to organizations such as Eastern, Pan Am and so

on. Most of us are not ideologically attached to Crown corporations that do not serve a public interest, a public purpose. However, in the case of Air Canada and in the case of other transportation organizations that purpose is obvious. That purpose has not gone away. We would probably feel no different today than we would have back in John A. Macdonald's time when he established a Canadian national railway as a public service.

• (1630)

When the Minister responsible for privatization stated the Government would look at privatization she also stated that there were certain reasons for privatization. As I said before, those reasons are not applicable to Air Canada. First, the Minister said one reason would be if a corporation did not serve a public purpose, but Air Canada still serves a public policy purpose. She said that the Government would privatize a corporation if it were adding to the national debt. Air Canada has not added to the national debt. As well, she said, if a Crown corporation did not compete well in the private sector it would be privatized. Air Canada competes very well as a Crown corporation. Because of Canada's vast geography and sparse population it is vital that our east-west links be kept as a matter of public policy purpose. It is also important that marginal and uneconomic routes be kept in place by commercial carriers. We have examples of this in other transportation areas. If you have sparsely populated areas, eventually these areas lose service or the Government is required to subsidize a carrier that serves them. In the past it has been just as easy and almost as profitable in certain areas of transportation development to allow Crown corporations to pioneer the opening of certain lines and then to allow commercial companies to fulfil public policy requirements.

I have several other points I could make but I know my time is rapidly coming to an end. Let me summarize. The Government has said that the money it will get for Air Canada would be spent on social programs. We all know that this is a bit of a farce. One submarine less would cover the refurbishing of Air Canada entirely. I think the Government needs to take a good look at this program of privatization.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Keeper):

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following therefor:

"Bill C-129, an Act to provide for the continuance of Air Canada under the Canada Business Corporations Act and for the issuance and sale of shares thereof to the public, be not now read a second time but that the Order for second reading be discharged, the Bill withdrawn and the subject matter thereof referred to the Standing Committee on Transport."

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Questions or comments?

Mr. Grisé: Madam Speaker, I listened very carefully to the comments of my colleague, the Hon. Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo). Once again, I must ask what else is new.