

The next motion to be dealt with is Motion No. 14 standing in the name of the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin).

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West) moved:

Motion No. 14.

That Bill C-18, be amended in Clause 15 by striking out line 20 at page 7 and substituting the following therefor:

"Agency, including an adequate number of inspectors for each mode of transportation, which would be tied to the volume of traffic in each mode, shall be appointed in accordance".

He said: Mr. Speaker, one of the items that came up most frequently when the committee travelled to hear submissions on the White Paper entitled *Freedom to Move*, and when it held hearings on the legislation, was the question of the adequacy of the inspection services in all modes of transportation. That question came from people in the trucking industry, from forwarders and receivers of other modes of transportation, from a number of trade unions and even from many corporations. In fact, either the Canadian Manufacturers' Association or the Canadian Chamber of Commerce called for a substantial improvement and increase in the capacity of government agencies to carry out inspections to ensure the adequacy, safety and security of the various modes of transportation.

As the Bill reads now, there can be the appointment of a secretary and such other officers and employees as are necessary for the proper conduct of the business of the agency, and these employees shall be appointed in accordance with the Public Service Employment Act. This amendment adds after the word "Agency" the following:

—including an adequate number of inspectors for each mode of transportation, which would be tied to the volume of traffic in each mode, shall be appointed in accordance—

It is in accordance with the Public Service Employment Act. That motion would answer the request of literally dozens and dozens of witnesses who appeared before the committee, and would meet the desires of the transporters themselves.

● (1620)

I remember an officer of a major trucking company telling me there had not been a provincial or federal government inspector around his trucks or in his shops for over five years. He wants them to come in and examine his facilities, equipment and employees to see how well qualified they are. He wants them to examine his maintenance practices and procedures in case they are insufficient because he wants to know about it. He says safety not only comes first, safety pays. Even when safety costs money it pays off. When a senior officer of a major trucking company says he wants a government inspector to come and examine his premises and practices on a frequent basis, he also wants that to apply to everyone. That particular trucking company has an excellent record and reputation. It has first-class mechanics and maintenance schedules. It does not cut corners. However, what gives that reputable company a bad name is the fly-by-nighter

National Transportation Act, 1986

who does not have mechanics or facilities. Those companies do not carry out proper and frequent maintenance of their equipment and vehicles. They are the ones that cause trouble for the entire industry. Most of this is because the Government has not had the capacity to carry out the kind and frequency of inspections that need to be carried out and for which the industry itself is asking.

It is false economy to try and hold down government expenditures in this way. The Government has said there will be no compromise on safety, so I am sure this amendment will help the Government live up to that commitment. There has been a modest increase of a few inspectors in two or three years but not anywhere near sufficient, whether it be for the air mode, trucking or rail. In fact, if I recall correctly, 17 rail inspectors had to worry about an area covering 10,000 miles of track and tens of thousands of items of rolling stock and locomotives. There is no way that many people can handle that large a territory in an adequate manner. It is not the inspector's fault and it is not the railroad's fault. It is the fact that we have not provided a sufficient quantity of qualified people to carry out those inspections and enforce the regulations and the law regarding maintenance and safety practices. Surely that is one of the prime requisites in national transportation legislation and a stated objective of the Government. Because that is true, I expect that the Government will find this motion to be most welcome.

[Translation]

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent): Mr. Speaker, if the House decided to accept the motion put forward by the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin), Clause 15 as amended would in fact read as follows:

15. The secretary of the Agency and such other officers and employees as are necessary for the proper conduct of the business of the Agency, including an adequate number of inspectors for each mode of transportation, which would be tied to the volume of traffic in each mode, shall be appointed in accordance with the Act.

Of course, the motion addresses the need for safety in all modes of transport. During the hearings we held across Canada on the Bill, many people came and expressed their concern for safety.

Mr. Speaker, we must appreciate that this Bill opens up new frontiers—as it were—with respect to transportation. This is something new for Canada and, more to the point, it is coming at us fast. We have no experience with deregulation, we can only go by what is happening in the United States, or what has happened in the United States. And if we are to believe the evidence given by people who appeared at the hearings, we can conclude that the United States are experiencing certain safety problems.

So the rationale behind this amendment moved by my colleague is that we would be sure there are inspectors or enough personnel to carry out the necessary inspections. Mr. Speaker, this does not mean that the minute Bill C-18 is proclaimed there will be a mad rush to hire all kinds of people here and there.