

National Transportation Act, 1986

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I believe the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) had finished his speech so I will allow that comment in the question and comment period. Perhaps the Hon. Member for Regina West would like to reply.

Mr. Benjamin: The two remaining major airlines in Canada are still safer, more efficient, the cleanest, and still have a reliable reservations system far ahead of all the airlines in the United States, and we are inviting them to join the ranks of that mediocrity south of the 49th parallel. I am not about to agree to that and neither are my colleagues.

The other tragedy in this country is that we do not have decent passenger trains because this Government starves the passenger service, treats it like an orphan. We have had, relatively speaking, a good transportation system. That does not mean that it does not need a lot of improvement. It needs billions of dollars more of investment over the next 10 to 20 years. However, we used to lead the world, and now in many areas we are running 20 or 30 years behind. It does not matter whether it is rail, the trucking industry or our highways, we need a massive amount of public investment to keep our status as one of the leading countries in the world in transportation. We need that investment to make sure that Atlantic Canada, the North and the West receive equitable treatment compared to the three or four major market centres in Canada.

I invite my hon. friends to talk to the people in southwestern Ontario, who sent in scores of requests for the Transport Committee to come there. The Transport Committee did not go to Yellowknife or Whitehorse. It did not go to Prince George or Prince Rupert. They should talk to the mayors of those two towns and all the municipalities around them. The Transport Committee did not go to the Peace River country or talk to the folks in Dawson Creek, British Columbia or Grand Prairie, Alberta. This thing has been a sham. The deck has been stacked and loaded ever since the White Paper *Freedom to Move* came down. That is why I submit it is an ideological binge which is going to cost this country dearly.

Mr. Clifford: Mr. Speaker, I am just delighted to have the opportunity to address the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) formally because I really believe the Hon. Member has missed the point. Bill C-18 is an invitation to Canadians to access. It is an invitation for the Canadian public to travel in at least 20th century style. I hope the Hon. Member for Regina West can understand this.

He talks about Bill C-18 and the market-place and all the worries Canadians should have. I want to tell him that there are no worries in southwestern Ontario. The people there did not get the luxury of having the Transport Committee go there and listen to them, but they are really pleased because action is a lot louder than going to a meeting hall. There has been action on the part of this Government to move ahead with Bill C-18 and offer opportunities to the good burghers in southwestern Ontario so they can finally travel in the style of the 20th century before we get into the 21st century.

Let us just talk about London, Ontario and the opportunities which have arisen there. A year and a half ago Members opposite all said to me: "Air Canada is pulling out. There go the jets. There goes the service. Nothing else will happen in southwestern Ontario because the lights are going out". I did not know how I was ever going to travel between Ottawa and London. But what has happened in the interim? We did not just have one airline come forward and say that it wanted to provide that service. We did not have two come forward or even three. Yesterday it was announced that the fourth airline has come forward in southwestern Ontario. It wants to be a part of Bill C-18 and the future of transportation in Canada. I am sorry the Hon. member for Regina West missed this page. I am sorry about that.

We are frequently seeing all kinds of airlines coming to our community and giving us this opportunity to travel. It is like the Americans in 1978 when they passed their legislation. We expect 51 per cent more travellers to have access to this kind of transportation. They should not all have to walk and carry a lunch pail. They should have the opportunity to fly. They should have time on their hands and be able to move silently and quickly in the skies of Canada.

The jets are back in London, Ontario, and those Members opposite said that they would never come back. The market-place brought the jets back. We now have the regular service of jets, and safety came with them. Members opposite said we would never have safety, that safety would be finished because of this new Bill C-18. I want to tell those Hon. Members that Ameritek brought in state-of-the-art fire crash rescue equipment to Canada and to the world. It came first to London, Ontario. We have it there to protect our travelling public. We have the best. We have all kinds of frequency of service. We are a model for Canada. We have all kinds of airlines which want to come into the market-place. They want to provide cheap transportation and state of the art technology for Canadians, and they want to do it with safety. The Minister has ensured that the standards will never be surpassed by any country in the world. So we have it all, and this Government should be congratulated.

I want to ask the Hon. Member for Regina West what this is all about? What is this bogeyman? What is wrong with the market-place deciding? What is your problem? What happened to Regina West? Does no one want to fly out there?

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, that was a combination of the Hon. Member's third reading speech, I guess. I thought the Hon. Member for Papineau (Mr. Ouellet) was scheduled to be the next speaker.

I want to tell my hon. friend from London that what happened in Regina is going to happen in London. The Government threw it open. We got one airline and then a second airline. We were told we had to have more competition, and we got a third airline. The market is not big enough for three airlines, so one of them stayed for a year and then pulled out. Then we have to become an international airport, so we