

mountain and now it is getting pretty big and scary and they are waking up to the actions they themselves started.

Deregulation has already taken place to a great extent. Under existing legislation, there is a rule that refers to public convenience and necessity and this provides some protection for the public. Even so, the regulatory environment has been loosened up a great deal. While there have been some seat sales, Canadians cannot point to any great nirvana in terms of reduced transportation fares. The Government is simply gambling that its further giant step in the direction of deregulation will result in bargain-basement fares. If it does not work, then we will be paying an enormous price because we could lose Air Canada and we could lose in the areas of safety and service.

Even if the Government's gamble does work, what will we have? We may win on price but is price the only consideration? Is there not a place in transportation policy for considering the value of a service as determined by convenience, availability and safety?

I would point out that there have been a number of disasters in the transportation industry. I think in particular of the Air-India disaster. When transportation companies are put into a deregulated environment in which they take responsibility for safety and security, it is obvious that the price of the ticket is not the only consideration. Safety is an essential consideration as well.

The Government is taking a big gamble on behalf of Canadians. Why does it not put its studies on the table? Why does it not tell us precisely what it expects fares to be if this legislation goes through? Based on our experiences to date, I doubt that we will see the air fare nirvana that the Government has been holding out as a carrot to Canadians. I am afraid we will pay a price in terms of safety and service.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is very important, because the interests of all Canadians are at stake here. Our transportation system is not just a matter of rates but also of safety and service.

I believe the Government is gambling with the interests of Canadians. It wants to offer Canadians the lowest possible fares for transportation, but it has failed to prove this will indeed be the case, which I doubt it will in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, I know I should finish my speech, and I simply want to say in concluding that Canadians do not want a Government that is taking a serious gamble with their interests. They want a Government that takes a balanced approach to these issues, since there is more involved than just the price of a ticket.

● (1210)

[*English*]

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, I had not anticipated speaking on the question we have before us

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because I thought the correctness of the legislation would be self-evident to any rational, thinking human being. However, we have just had a demonstration from the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) and the Hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Keeper) that perhaps rationale and common sense are not as prevalent, certainly in this House, as I had hoped they would be. I therefore feel compelled to add one or two points.

Is it not self-evident that competition results in the best service for the customer? You do not really have to think about that. All you have to do is go to your local grocery store and then walk across the street to your local post office. Can you not see that the level of service and prices that you get from the grocery store are far better than you get in the post office? That is not because of the people who work there. It is because of the system imposed in the case of the post office when Government is involved in things where it has no real place.

I am not surprised at the arguments we have heard here today. It is typical of the Liberals and their socialist allies to want to control everything. We will decide, they say, where you can fly from and to and what price you will pay. There is no point in leaving that to the open market because we are better than the open market. We are more intelligent than you, the consumer, or you, the provider of service. We the Government should tell you what you can do and what you cannot do. The Liberals and the NDP look upon the providers and consumer of services as some kind of incompetents. They cannot get over the state of mind which says that the Government knows best and can therefore impose its will on all other Canadians.

I do not know, Sir, whether you have ever spent any time dealing with the regulatory process in transportation as it existed in the past. I sat in on ATC hearings and have seen high-powered and high-priced lawyers trying to belittle the applicant concerned. It is a waste of time, money, and human effort which could be better spent on competition rather than trying to beat down some guy in a quasi judicial hearing. Instead of competing in trying to hire the smoothest talking lawyer, they should be improving the service concerned, which is what will happen as a result of the legislation presently before the House.

I was astounded when the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap said that deregulation was against the little guy. It is the very opposite. It is the little guy who will benefit most from deregulation. He is the guy who cannot afford to hire the special consultants and lawyers under the existing system. He is forbidden to get into business right now unless he goes through six months, a year, or two years of judicial proceedings. He cannot even start out. Under the new system proposed by the Minister of Transport, using the fit, able and willing criteria, the little guy will be able to get into business where he cannot even get a start right now. In so doing, if you are a big operator in transportation and you are always scared of little guys starting up in competition, that will keep you honest. The