

I would further say that this concern held by many Canadians, and shared by others, perhaps poses one of the most dangerous threats to the whole notion of international and national commerce and the exchange of people and ideas. One of the great advantages of the modern world is its interdependency. That has been brought about primarily through our transportation modes which are now under threat. We have seen the first signs. Tourists are nervous about travelling to Europe and that anxiety is spreading to the point where people are increasingly anxious about the safety of themselves, their families and loved ones, whether they are on a highway, an aircraft, or whatever it may be.

Some of the measures which were put forward in the Minister's statement are very familiar. They were matters which were under active consideration and decisions by the previous Government, such as the modernization program for radar, the Aeronautics Act amendments, and so on. I am not saying that other than to put on the record that those are efforts we want to make.

However, I do want to draw attention, if I may, to a couple of the proposals made by the Minister and some concerns my own caucus has raised. First, with respect to air safety, one of the doubts often raised about deregulation of the economic system is what impact it may have upon the safety of the carriers. There has to be an equal and parallel effort made to ensure that as we go forward in reducing the regulatory handicaps which face the airline industry, as well as other transportation industries, there is no sacrifice to safety.

Recently there has been disturbing evidence produced in the United States regarding the impact of the deregulatory system upon safety. It has certainly been a matter put forward during the course of various hearings of the Commons committee across the country. The question is whether the carriers can be expected to properly meet the continually high standards set by the Department of Transport, and others, which puts a very strong onus on inspection and on the ability of the Government itself to improve and enhance its regulatory system on the safety side while at the same time deregulating on the economic side.

I want to emphasize to the Minister that before he presents to the House his proposed legislation, it is equal very important to present the kind of measures and steps he intends to take to deal with the problem of safety as a consequence of deregulation over the next four or five years. We would simply want to serve notice that that would be a very important requirement.

On the question of the transportation of dangerous goods, I cannot think of any area which plagues Ministers of Transport more than that particular issue. Ministers of Transport are faced with an awful dilemma. We know a modern industrialized society depends on the incredibly important movement of all kinds of products, chemicals and others, throughout this country in order to survive. We know the railways themselves, as primary movers of those products, have to do so within a proper economic range. Yet, we know the probabilities of serious accidents grow each day as more and more products come on line and the volume of traffic increases. I am pleased

Statements by Ministers

the Minister will establish a task force, but there have been other task forces in the past.

I can recall when I was Minister of Transport bringing in the heads of the major railways to tell them I wanted to see clear evidence as to why the speed of trains going through urban areas should not be reduced. I do not know if the Minister has received that kind of report from them as yet but I think it is clearly time for some action to be taken to reduce the speed. Ideally, I suppose, the only real answer to that problem is to ultimately remove that kind of traffic from heavily urbanized areas.

I think the Minister would be very interested in the proposal put forward recently by the Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, the big city mayors, for a major infrastructure program in our urban areas. Part of it would be major relocation of railway yards and lines to outside areas so they would not endanger an urban area. I would hope the Minister would be a major supporter of that program. It would need a large amount of federal assistance to go ahead and I know that money is a preoccupation of this Government. However, in my own judgment, the increasing danger of the movement of dangerous goods will not be eliminated until there is a major program of relocation and removal of railway lines and yards from the urban areas.

There have been mounds of regulations passed. I recall with some horror seeing the volumes on my desk after they were properly administered. That was effective in terms of what happens when there is an accident, that is, reporting, responding and identifying. But, in terms of the root causes of what kind of major tragedy could befall us, the regulations say very little. Therefore, I think it has to be tackled ultimately at the source, that is, simply the sheer probabilities of further tragedies taking place.

I would also like to emphasize something which has disquieted me, as it has the Minister, and that is the modernization of the railway system itself. We were both involved, as were other Hon. Members of the House, in the extensive debate on the Crow rate. Part of the discussion was about the ability to get money into the railways' hands in order to modernize. I have looked at their budgets since then and it seems to me that for other economic reasons there is a cut-back in a number of those areas. I feel it is the responsibility of the Minister to sit down with the railways, one of which he is the chief shareholder—in fact, the only shareholder—and ask what methods of modernization incorporate the most up-to-date efficient and effective safety system. That is a very clear question. I do not pretend to be an expert, and I will not try to lecture the Minister on the techniques involved, but there has been enough expert commentary to suggest there are improved methods being used in other parts of the world in terms of signalling, transmission and communication. Those methods should be part of the modernization program, and not just in western Canada. We have very heavy volumes in the central Canada core, as the Minister well knows.