

*National Transportation Act, 1986*

has played an important and useful role in the transport sector in Canada.

I hope that several of the employees and even some of the present members of the Commission will be transferred to the new National Transportation Agency.

I thank the Parliamentary Secretary who on behalf of the government agreed, following my request last evening, to introduce an amendment which to some extent will protect the employees of the Canadian Transportation Agency.

As I said yesterday, at the very last minute, before the proceedings of the Committee on Transport ended, the legal adviser of the Department of Transport introduced an amendment to clause 273 of the bill which, with all the adjustments, became section 272. Moreover, he added a subsection which was liable to frighten greatly the employees of that agency. I refer specifically to section 272 to which was added at the very last minute that clause which stated: Exclusion from compensation. The persons appointed as Members of the former authority, the former Canadian Transport Commission, are in no way entitled to claim or receive compensation for damages, indemnity or any other form of indemnification from Her Majesty in right of Canada nor her agents by reason of the abolition of their functions under subsection 9 and under this Act, except for any indemnification the Governor in Council may authorize or provide for by order in council.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, this was much more than a minor technical amendment, it was purely and simply *carte blanche* for the Government to fire outright people who, in good faith, a few years ago, three or four or five years ago accepted to leave their jobs or their communities and come to Ottawa to work for the Canadian Transport Commission and take a position for a specified period of time.

**Mr. Robichaud:** —to work for Canadians.

**Mr. Ouellet:** And as my colleague for Westmorland—Kent suggests, to work for Canadians.

Clearly, that amendment allowed the Government to decide the next day that a Member of the Commission was fired, he had to go, because the Commission no longer existed, and he was stripped of everything he became entitled to when he accepted that appointment.

This is a kind of retroactive legislation that should not be done, and if there is something that is ignominious it is to pass a retroactive legislation that strips individuals from rights and privileges that were freely and properly conveyed to them. I commend and I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for accepting that we add subclause 11 to clause 272 of Bill C-18, thereby inserting an exception to subclause 10, the preceding paragraph, which states that notwithstanding subsection 10:

The Governor in Council may, by order, authorize or provide relief of a form described in that subsection.

I therefore take for granted that this is an indication of magnanimity from the Government. I am very grateful to the Parliamentary Secretary for having very rapidly corrected the situation, and I hope that good intention that is now inserted in the act will be reflected in concrete steps, appropriate, fair and

proper settlements for all those who are now employed by the Canadian Transport Commission and who, because that Commission is abolished, will not be unfairly and rudely treated by the Government.

In conclusion, let me say that the Liberal Party not only has reservations on Bill C-18 and that desire for quick deregulation, but is also concerned about what this Government will want to do with its Crown Corporations. We also believe that regional development is a major component of any transportation policy, that transportation in Canada must be complemented by Crown Corporations. We cannot leave Canadian transportation in the hands of private enterprise alone.

That is why the Liberal Party has always believed in the usefulness of such Crown corporations as the CN, Air Canada and VIA Rail. We are concerned about this desire to privatize at any cost which seem to haunt the minds of Tory ministers.

One of the finest success stories in the area of Crown corporations is Air Canada. When it marked its 50th Anniversary, the Liberal Party emphasized the important role played by this Crown corporation. Together with my colleagues the Hon. Member for Westmorland—Kent (Mr. Robichaud) and the Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe (M. Tobin), we prepared a press release to demonstrate that we continued to believe in the important and crucial role played by this Crown corporation in the development of our country, a role which we felt it should continue to play, especially in the light of deregulation.

It was as a response to that persistent rumour to the effect that the Tory government was about to privatize Air Canada that my colleague, our party's critic in the area of privatization, and my other colleague, who is associate critic in the area of transportation, and I prepared this document and insisted on emphasizing the *raison d'être* of Air Canada, our national carrier.

From the time it was established to this day, Air Canada has provided the travelling public with transportation services from sea to sea, while reflecting the federal government's commitment to the principles of bilingualism, employment equity and regional procurement policy.

A privatized Air Canada would no longer pursue the same objectives and there would be a definite danger of certain routes and regions being abandoned, because they are not so profitable as some others.

Henceforth, the objective of a universally accessible air passenger transportation service, for which Trans-Canada lines were first created, would become out of reach.

We wanted to emphasize that Air Canada has played a significant role in the past and that it will have to play a similar one in the context of deregulation. For as the Tory government is about to adopt Bill C-18, which will bring about the complete deregulation of the air transportation industry, we must wonder what is the wisdom and the need at this time to privatize Air Canada.