

• (1230)

One might ask, what is the matter with this? At this point, local trucking firms are run by people who live in the Yukon. They are committed to the community, run the services in the community and even run for public office, participate in the little league and so on. They are there to stay.

Branch plant operations of trucking firms, if one can call it that, do not have this commitment. They are concerned with serving the high volume, high profit routes. Small firms will lose out. Those who are willing to provide a year-round service to rural communities will lose out because they will not be able to compete for the high volume and high profit routes.

We are particularly vulnerable in the Yukon in the summer, both through air transportation and trucking because the highest profitability is in the summer months, with tourism, mining and exploration and the transport of various goods. It is during the summer that heavy equipment and other materials can be transported. If the larger firms come in to skim off those good routes, the smaller, year-round companies will be left with the winter routes. They will not be able to survive because they must average out their profitability in the good months and winter months.

The Northern Aviation Transport Association recognized this problem and made a very impassioned plea to the committee, as did the Government of Yukon. They did receive a hearing from the committee about some of the problems these regulations would raise.

We will not have an equitable system under deregulation. The Minister may say that the problem has been addressed for the north by the inclusion of designated areas, under which my riding falls. This is quite true in the case of air carriers, but the main question for the people of Yukon is, what will happen now that we have lost the public convenience and necessity test? The Government has allowed the north the illusion of protection with its designated area, but without the committee and the appeal system of the Canadian Transport Commission, and without the public convenience and necessity test, how will the community complain about eroded service? Who will hear these complaints, and on what grounds can a successful argument be presented? What action can be taken if such an argument will be made?

As the House is well aware, my predecessor certainly has something to do with the Canadian Transport Commission. I assume that the Transport Commission is not being changed because my predecessor is the Chairman and will continue in that role, but certainly he does understand some of these issues, having been in the Yukon for many years.

Without the tried and true test of public convenience, the Government is creating great uncertainty for the people of

*National Transportation Act, 1987*

northern Canada with this new environment based on charging as much as the market will bear. Without a policy entrenched in this Bill, which clearly states that people come first, the Government is inviting every opportunist who understands our transportation problems to hold the north up for ransom.

An obvious question arising from the issue of the designated area is: Why did the Government stop with air travel? Surely it is not suggesting that truck transport to the north is less vulnerable, or that truck transport is not every bit as important? I am certain there are many areas in Canada which should have rail transportation protected under such a scheme as well, but neither House would adopt such a common-sense extension of the air designated area, nor would they make the air designated area effective. It is deeply disappointing and makes one wonder how earnest the Government is in wanting to protect the north from this policy.

I mentioned that in the Yukon we have a very fragile industrial economy, characterized by high operating costs and relatively low volume. I have also said that the trucking firms are small and owner operated. It is a very important character of our community that people can be facilitated to become independent and remain self-sufficient through the operation of their own business.

I believe that as this legislation comes into force we will see more and more problems. While we have been given some hope as to what will happen, we have not yet seen the evidence.

I want to deviate somewhat from this subject, if I may, to say a few words about my constituency. We are fortunate in the Yukon because we have a population that, while small, includes aboriginal people whose ancestors have been in that land for over 30,000 years. We are able to benefit from that accumulated wisdom and knowledge as well as from the technology and science of other cultures. We are certainly fortunate in that respect.

In many ways, the Yukon is a microcosm of Canadian society and despite our small population, the dynamics of federal, provincial and territorial relations, of human rights and of immigration are readily seen and experienced.

I might add that in the Yukon, perhaps one of the most harsh areas of Canada, we have a number of refugees and immigrants who contribute significantly to the Yukon society and economy.

The impact of public policy in an area like this will be immediately and readily visible. Northerners are used to a struggle. The aboriginal people have a highly evolved culture and it is they who made it possible for Europeans who came to this country to survive. Today, they are struggling for a just land claims settlement.