

the degree of overcompetition which is allowed by this Liberal government. There is no sense in flying a half-empty Air Canada plane to Thunder Bay or Sault Ste. Marie, and at the same time flying a half-empty Transair plane to the same centres.

Overcompetition is reducing the load factor for the airlines. The only way an airline can be profitable is for it to keep the number of seats occupied at the highest level, and not fly half empty. The more competition we introduce into our national airline transportation system, the greater the likelihood of deficit on the part of individual carriers. We in this country realize that we do not have a large enough population to maintain a full load factor for the many airlines which are in existence.

The concept written into the bill, that profit must be the primary guideline, and not service, worries us. The minister's statements with regard to selling off parts of public enterprise worries us as well. For these reasons, we do not want this bill to go through as it is; we want to force a vote so that Canadians may see where their elected representatives stand on the vital issue of service in the transportation system of this country.

[Translation]

Mr. Charles Lapointe (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, all last week and again today we heard many remarks about Bill C-3 respecting the reorganization of Air Canada. Having attended all the debates, Mr. Speaker, I am reminded of my college days when I frequently won first prize in literary analysis. I was quite surprised to see my hon. colleagues spend more than five days on four lines of subclause (1.1) of clause 7 (1), namely the concept of Air Canada profitability. I do not see why so much time was spent discussing that question because it seems to me only logical for a corporation, whether a Crown corporation or not, to operate on sound business principles, and especially for such a corporation to try to make a profit.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, no mention was made of the fact that clauses 8 and 9 of this bill are there precisely to ensure that notion of service that seems to be overly worrying our colleagues of the NDP. Clause 8 says, and I quote:

8. The Corporation shall, in the exercise of its capacities and the carrying out of its activities, comply with directions of a general nature given to it in writing by the Governor in Council.

It is quite obvious, Mr. Speaker, that in spite of the so-called lessons of history and geography that we were given by certain colleagues of the NDP, members of this House realize that our national carrier, Air Canada, must provide service to certain disadvantaged areas of this country, not in the large population centres of our capitals or our large provincial cities. And this clause 8 empowering the governor in council to give directions to Air Canada is there precisely to allow the governor in council to say to Air Canada: You are going to provide service in such and such areas of this country, and on the other hand, as provided in clause 9, the government will be able to reimburse any losses incurred through any such non-profitable service as the airline may be required to provide.

Air Canada

During all that debate last week, Mr. Speaker, we heard, for example, our colleague from York Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) accuse the government of nearly causing Air Canada to go bankrupt, of piling on government deficits, because of their socialist principles. Immediately after, we heard our friends of the NDP say that this was another case of mismanagement because we were sacrificing the objectives of our national transportation policy for the sake of profit.

• (1602)

I think that if we must choose between what the hon. member for York-Simcoe says and the criticism from our friends of the New Democratic Party concerning this bill, the government is right and the old Latin proverb *in medio stat virtus* applies once more.

We had another surprise during that debate, Mr. Speaker, and it brings me to say that it might be highly desirable to reflect on the work of this House. For almost two days we have been listening to our colleagues from the Edmonton area express their preoccupations concerning problems at the Edmonton airport. Mr. Speaker, however serious the problem I still do not believe that the Edmonton airport issue is very much related to the reform of Air Canada.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, I wish to say very briefly how surprised I was to listen today to the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro) who seemed astonished that some Victoria airport employees had to speak both official languages of this country. Mr. Speaker, it does not matter whether this guideline was issued by Air Canada or the Department of Transport, it simply requires some employees dealing with security to be proficient in both official languages. My conclusion, Mr. Speaker, is that the official languages issue should not be hidden behind a series of regulations, that we should stop splitting hairs and consider that the use of both official languages of Canada is a matter of courtesy in public services. If we cannot or if, according to the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich, it is ridiculous to expect bilingual services from Victoria airport security personnel, this same principle will apply at Baie-Comeau, Sept-Îles, Roberval and other airports.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to that bilingualism policy, I should have thought that the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich would have rejoiced in the fact that an attempt is being made to have bilingual employees at the Victoria airport.

I feel that only with that type of good will, everywhere in Canada, while protecting the persons who now hold those jobs, can bilingual employees replace unilingual ones as jobs become available. That is the only way true understanding of that bilingualism policy can be achieved.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, Bill C-3 is well-balanced and I urge all hon. members to adopt it very quickly.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Is the House ready for the question?