

*National Transportation Act, 1986*

**Mr. Girard:** Mr. Speaker, I wrote my question down so I could get a simple answer instead of having somebody skating around. Has the NDP examined the principle of the new Act where economic regional development is an objective? Could the Hon. Member also explain how the new provision in the Act for non-predatory incentive rates acts against regions of the country? It is a plain and simple question and I want a plain and simple answer instead of a skater.

**Mr. Angus:** Mr. Speaker, even though I live beside the largest skating rink in the world I have never learned how to skate. Let me deal with the objective of the Act. It contains nice-sounding words and they are there because of pressure from the Atlantic premiers.

**Mr. Girard:** He is skating.

**Mr. Angus:** However, there is nothing in the Bill to implement them. I challenge the Hon. Member to show me the clauses in the Bill which implement that nice motherhood statement. They are not there.

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, the NDP says the legislation will provide access and advantage for U.S. railway and trucking companies in Canada which are not available to Canadian railway and trucking companies in the U.S. Would the Hon. Member like to comment on that?

**Mr. Angus:** Mr. Speaker, during our hearings and in consultation since then with the Canadian Trucking Association, among others, indicated that because of U.S. laws they are unable to operate freely in the U.S. in the same manner in which this Bill proposes to allow all trucking companies to operate in Canada, particularly the Americans. If, as we believe will happen, the American companies begin to not only come into this market and establish some hubs in the Toronto area, for example, and then go from there, given their size—we all know that the larger you are, the better able you are to compete—they will be able to out compete us. They have economies of scale and a national transportation network in the U.S. What Canadian trucking company will be able to go down and establish a trucking centre in Chicago or farther south? They just will not be able to do so. I do not have the specific numbers, but we have seen a lot of small trucking companies in the American industry go bankrupt because of deregulation. The situation now is that fewer and fewer companies are hauling goods on the highways in the U.S. That is one of the dangers and the Hon. Member should realize that.

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, I find it almost ludicrous that the NDP does not have any faith in the ability of Canadian business to compete with the U.S. in any field, including trucking.

**Mr. Angus:** Mr. Speaker, if the rules were equal and the companies were the same size, then I would bet my money on a Canadian company. However, they are not and, quite

frankly, we will be squeezed out in trucking the way we have been squeezed out in a hell of a lot of other things by the U.S.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Resuming debate with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Kilgour).

**Mr. David Kilgour (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, in fairness to my friends opposite, it is the turn of the Liberal Party if they have a speaker ready to go.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent):** Mr. Speaker, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to deal with Bill C-18, concerning the National Transportation Act, 1986.

This Bill applies to transport by railways, transport by air, transport by water, transport by a commodity pipeline, and transport for hire by an extra-provincial truck or bus undertaking.

It is therefore a Bill which will affect the industry responsible for moving goods, merchandise and of course people from one end of this country to the other, both in the West-East and north-south directions.

Mr. Speaker, that is where this Bill raises its first problem: It will affect differently the various regions of Canada. Its implications on remote areas will certainly be greater and more direct than in the central part of this country and, in many cases, will be negative.

Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, it was felt that the National Transportation Act needed to be looked into and amended for the purpose, of course, of improving and updating it.

The previous Government had recognized that changes were necessary and had proposed a gradual deregulation of the transport industry. Since the enactment of the previous Act in 1967, our economy has of course undergone several changes, which affected the transport industry.

The task of the previous administration, the Government of the day, was to make the legislation more flexible in order to allow the transport industry to better serve the country and the needs of consumers as well as its own. The changes were to occur gradually to allow for a gradual adjustment of the industry. The idea was not to spin the transport industry into a frenzy by introducing major and sudden changes. And that is exactly what this bill will bring about. The entire industry will be turned upside down and will not be given time to adjust.

Of course, the bill has already drawn criticism from the trucking industry, the rail industry, as well as from the air transport industry. And all this is happening because the Government has now decided that it is time for a change. Of course, we agree that changes are necessary, but should we turn everything upside down? Why such haste? Where did the pressure come from? In all sincerity, Mr. Speaker, this is a question we must ask.