

*National Transportation Act, 1986***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION ACT, 1986ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER REPORT AND THIRD
READING STAGES OF BILL C-18

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Hnatyshyn (for the Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):

That, further to the notice given on Thursday, June 11, 1987, by the Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council, and pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 117, in relation to Bill C-18, an Act respecting national transportation, four further hours be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and four hours to the consideration of the third reading stage of the Bill; and

That fifteen minutes before the end of the four hours allotted to the report stage consideration and to the third reading stage consideration of the said Bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required, for the purpose of this Order and, in turn, every question necessary in order to dispose of the stage of the Bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, government propaganda would have us believe that because of Bill C-18, we in Canada will in time have an efficient and low-cost transportation service. It would have us believe that it will provide a balance between the interests of the shipper on the one hand and the transportation carrier on the other. Government propaganda would have us believe that Bill C-18 will give us a more flexible and competitive transportation environment. However, when I listened to the Government's very carefully prepared message indicating that Bill C-18 will achieve an efficient, low-cost transportation system, I was aware that to a significant extent this thesis is based upon the results of deregulation in the country to the south of us, our neighbour, the United States of America.

It has been said by some that the Staggers Act of 1980, for example, is working well in the United States. It is working well, it is claimed, with respect to the relatively low increases in railway freight rates. It is working well, its advocates claim, with respect to increased rail sensitivity to shippers' needs. It is working well, its advocates say, because there are significant gains in railroad economic efficiency. All of these conclusions are supported by the Economics and Finance Department of the Association of American Railroads.

● (1510)

If the propaganda ended there I think we could promptly support C-18 and we would see no reason to oppose a time allocation measure. However, many Members of this House know there is another side to this story of deregulation, and that other side has at least three facets. There are probably many more but since my time is limited I mention only three: safety; impact on regional development; and the effect upon jobs in the transportation industry.

Many Members have said there is nothing to be concerned about with respect to safety. They have asked us to take their

assurances on that. The Standing Committee on Transport was given no mandate in its terms of reference to deal with safety in a deregulated environment. Indeed, witnesses repeatedly expressed their amazement that the committee was attempting to comment on deregulation in the total absence of any analysis of safety standards. No less a reputable organization than the Canadian Air Line Pilots Association said:

Even in *Freedom to Move* itself, safety is mentioned but in passing, with unsupported statements to the effect that economic regulatory reform will not be permitted to be detrimental to safety standards.

CALPA also said:

Safety concerns had so grown by last year that the U.S. Secretary of Transportation ordered a "white gloves" safety audit which resulted in 16 of 43 airlines, both old and new, being disciplined. Since that time, in-depth inspections have resulted in further action, the most notable being the record \$1.5 million fine recently levied against American Airlines for numerous safety deficiencies.

When Hon. Members tell us that we should not worry about safety, that we have looked into it sufficiently, that we should accept their assurances, I say no, we cannot. There are concerns about safety and we need more evidence before this House gives its approval to C-18.

My second point is with respect to regional development. There is growing concern in this country that the Conservative Government is abandoning its role in regional economic development. I do not have the time now to cite all the evidence to support that concern, but C-18 as amended offers no more than a weak and feeble nod in the direction of concern for regional development.

I am aware that the original Bill was amended in committee. I am aware that Clause 3(1)(d) now says that transportation is recognized as a key to regional economic development and commercial viability of transportation links is balanced with regional economic development objectives in order that the potential economic strengths of each region may be realized. I say that is weak and ineffectual.

I compare that to the amendment proposed by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Westmorland—Kent (Mr. Robichaud). Rather than saying commercial viability must be balanced with regional development, the Hon. Member argued that where a service or facility is required for the achievement of national or regional social and economic development objectives, these objectives should take precedence over the objective of commercial viability whenever the two are in conflict.

Thus on the one hand in the amendment to the Bill which was accepted we have no more than a tacit recognition that somehow regional development may be important. Through this Bill we are opening the door to a more efficient and competitive industry but we are paying a price with respect to nation building. We all know we cannot build a nation if we simply write off the regions of this country. The federal and provincial Governments must be able to take combined action in order to maintain and build transportation facilities if it is in the public interest to do so.