

back to the sporadic seat sales which are offered to fill in empty seats on planes during the off times of the year.

At the same time, the Government has turned around and complained that a foreign carrier is out-competing Canadian carriers. I gather from press reports that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Crosbie) has decided to take some legal action to try to prevent this unfair competition.

I want to ask the Minister through you, Madam Speaker, this question: Which way will it be? Will it be competition to bring about lower rates for people? Or will it be a regulated process which ensures that there is protection for the consumer? In this way, on the one hand, they will not be overcharged, or ripped-off to use the vernacular, while on the other hand it will be certain that the carriers, be it on the air side, the rail side or on the trucking side as a result of Bill C-19, have an appropriate level of income to ensure their stability. The stability of their operations means money to pay their employees properly. It means money to pay for health and safety measures. It means money to pay for security, safety equipment and other things.

I think it is important that we accept the amendment to delete subclause (b) so that we remove the phoney principle of the market-place and ensure that we have some form of economic regulation right across the board. In some of our other motions we will be dealing with that. I think it is important to the country as a whole.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise once again on Bill C-18, because it is obviously a most important Bill for Canada, for all Canadians, and especially for remote areas where services are frequently not on par with those in more densely populated areas. I therefore support wholeheartedly the amendment moved by my colleague for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) which suggests that the Bill be amended by striking out the following lines:

competition and market forces are, whenever feasible, the prime agents in providing viable and effective transportation services—

The purpose of this Bill, we are told, is to increase services and competition, so that somehow Canadians will be better served throughout the country through increased competition. We should remember however, Madam Speaker, that free enterprise tends to eliminate competition. And of course, less competition means reduced services, so that after a while consumers begin to realize that there is no competition and that they have to pay more to get the services they need. And of course, in the end, it is the consumer that foots the bill. He ends up paying more. Of course, there may be more competition for some time, we may be able to benefit from a little more competition for some time, but you know that in the end the strongest will always win, and that of course will happen in the transportation sector just as anywhere else.

*National Transportation Act, 1986*

I therefore support this amendment, Madam Speaker, because I believe it runs counter to paragraph 3(d), which reads:

(d) transportation is recognized as a key to regional economic development,

The commercial viability of transportation lines should be balanced against the goals of regional economic development so that the potential economic assets of each region may be fully developed.

I must say that paragraph (d) was amended in committee following long discussions and on the basis of many representations from both sides. Madam Speaker, I should like to suggest an amendment to this clause. However, I feel that paragraph (b) goes against paragraph (d), which deals with regional development. If we allow market forces and competition to operate freely, it goes without saying that we are going to lose some services. In my opinion, that is where the danger lies for our remote regions.

Madam Speaker, I could describe for you the situation which exists in south-eastern New Brunswick, where the market forces were left to operate freely. The Government has chosen the hands-off approach. It has refused to intervene. Of course, you are aware of the situation at the CNR workshops in Moncton. We have lost 800 jobs over the past two years. That is what happens when the market forces are left free to operate. Yet, the Government could have done something. It could have saved these jobs. It could have spared the few hundred workers affected the problem of having to move, because, as you know, our economy in south-eastern New Brunswick just could not create enough jobs over such a short period of time to absorb all these unemployed workers. So people are leaving. While flying home this past weekend, I met one of these workers who was returning from Winnipeg wondering whether he was going to move with his family. He asked me if there was anything anybody could do, because he was completely lost. That is what happens when market forces are left free to operate.

Last weekend again, as most Hon. Members, I used transport services, mostly to fly between Ottawa and Moncton. As recently as this spring, positions of mechanics were eliminated in Moncton, St. John and Fredericton. I contacted the Air Canada people and asked them how this was going to affect the services provided to the Moncton, St. John and Fredericton people, and I was assured that services would not be reduced in any way whatsoever. As I was flying home on Thursday night to spend the weekend with my family, the captain announced that the plane would land in Halifax, not because of adverse weather conditions in Moncton, but because of an electric problem. So he lands in Halifax. Why? Because there are no engineers in Moncton to look at the aircraft, and if he lands there, he cannot take off again. Despite the assurances I had that people in the area would suffer no service reductions. However, 100-odd people aboard that plane were rerouted: they had to land in Halifax, and those who had to go to Moncton early in the evening had