

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** With unanimous consent, I am prepared to recognize again the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon.

[*English*]

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Comuzzi:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for the unanimous consent. My colleague from Sudbury asked some very pertinent questions. All of them have developed since 1984. I am sure the problems have increased since deregulation has come upon us in Canada.

• (1800)

However let me say that most of those problems are accurate. I have been to Sudbury many times and there is an absence of jet service from Sudbury and other communities. There was a time when we could fly directly from Thunder Bay to Sudbury to Ottawa. It was a magnificent flight, but it was closed down because of deregulation. We now have to go to Toronto through all the hub and spoke concept.

There is a need in the Sudbury airport. If there is any airport in northern Ontario that really and truly requires upgrading, especially to handle the disabled people in our communities, it is Sudbury and Thunder Bay. My colleague certainly has vital concerns about air transport through the airport in Sudbury and the services provided to the people in her community.

I can only say that a local airport authority with the proper terms, not the terms as outlined in Bill C-85, that are responsive to the needs of the people in Sudbury and to the economic community or Sudbury and surrounding areas, because Sudbury is the hub, can administer to the airport in her community. I wish that she would support me in changing the terms and helping me to impress upon the government that it should change the terms of Bill C-85 to allow local authorities truly to operate independently of the restrictions in this legislation.

**Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure after that interesting exchange to get up and speak on the bill.

I believe a great deal of the debate today has shown the mistrust that certainly this side of the House of Commons has toward the Government of Canada and toward whatever it is bringing forward.

The Liberal Party of Canada opposes the privatization of Canadian airports. We support the transfer of the administration and management of airports to local authorities under certain conditions, which unfortunately are not met in this bill.

The criteria that we feel must be met before the bill is adopted by the House include continued federal government guarantees of safety, security and accessibility, including accessibility for the handicapped, and full application of the Official Languages Act to the local authority. Continuation of service to the public is the paramount criteria in the operation of airports, as well as the availability of transport Canada expertise and experience to the local authority.

We think the bill has to include guarantees that local taxes will not be called upon at any time in the future to finance the debt load of a local authority in carrying out what is a federal responsibility. Finally we have the guarantee to employees of job security as employees of Transport Canada.

Since becoming the Official Opposition critic for Public Service employment and staff relations, the government's policies have given me, employees of the Government of Canada, and large segments of the public serious cause for concern.

The government's somewhat indiscriminate five-year downsizing strategy has dramatically increased the workload of Public Service employees. At the same time those who are left have been living in fear of being the next on the downsizing hit list. One result of downsizing has been a dramatic increase in contracting out. The global budget for federal contracting out has increased from \$2 billion to \$3.2 billion.

While the government divests itself of employees and of responsibility for standards of service to the public, it is unable to account for whether indeed it is saving Canadians money or not and whether indeed it is giving them better value for money.

The public accounts committee was told this spring in hearings it held that the government does not know whether or not contracting out is saving money. It does not keep a record of contracting out expenditures. It does not require a cost comparison of contracting out as a way of doing things, compared to doing it in house with its own employees.