

I refer back to earlier comments that what we need is a structure set up within this Bill for an independent board that can make proper investigations without having it stalled or short-shifted by simply saying the legislation is not available, we have our board in place. In the case of marine traffic, with oil spills such as we have seen over the last little while on the west coast of Vancouver Island and on the West Coast of Canada, there should be the ability to appoint a public board of inquiry that, regardless of political affiliation, can properly bring recommendations back to Parliament after having looked at everything within.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Resuming debate. The Hon. Member for Moncton (Mr. Rideout).

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think that we on this side of the House are agreeable that an independent board to investigate transportation accidents and incidents is welcomed. I am most concerned, and I think my colleagues are concerned as well, that when you look at the definition of a transportation occurrence and you consider the magnitude that that definition strikes, one has to become somewhat concerned that a board consisting of five members will not have the capabilities to deal with the many incidents they will have to investigate. It is not just a matter of air investigations, but rail, oil spills, all of those sorts of things are going to have to be investigated. We are concerned on this side of the House that this board will not be able to do that. We think that the thrust is in the right direction. But we are concerned about the speed or the urgency which the Government seems to be attaching to this particular matter.

We feel that, fortunately for Members opposite, they are picking up the direction that the Liberal Government gave many years ago and are now seeing the way and the light and are moving in a positive and proper direction in that sense. However, we are worried that as they proceed in haste, they may be making mistakes.

We view the effects of things like deregulation and the ramifications that deregulation has on the transportation infrastructure as being one of paramount concern. We are concerned on this side of the House that when the pressure comes on the infrastructure, safety will be sacrificed on the altar of expediency.

I should tell you that in my experience as a municipal politician I have seen what can happen when deteriorating infrastructure strikes communities across this country. I speak with some experience in knowing terrible

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road conditions, terrible water and sewer conditions that strike municipalities all across this country. I could think of a classic case in Saint John, New Brunswick, where they had half the city without water for over a day. Those situations strike at the safety of citizens and I am concerned that with deregulation and the pressure that is obviously impacting on the transportation infrastructure, we may face and are now facing the same types of concern for safety.

We see a great deal of confusion and charges and countercharges amongst the present board. Our view is that a strong and independent board is absolutely essential if it is to function properly. Given the increased mandate of this board, we are very concerned that it will not be able to carry out the mandate which it has been assigned.

As mentioned earlier by a number of speakers, we are very concerned about the urgency in which the Government is now presenting this legislation. It is coming very quickly. While we agree it is important that there be some sort of improvement in what is going on, when you look at the Estey review of the Gander incident, the Dryden crash, just to name a few, we wonder why we are now proceeding with haste. The haste should have perhaps occurred a year or more ago.

Quite frankly, we wonder whether the Government is simply papering over the old board, just putting it aside by creating this new board, and not dealing with the inherent problems that were obvious with the old board. If that is the case, those problems will not disappear. They will still be there, only to arise again. I think there were inherent problems in the old board, just changing the faces does not necessarily help the problem. In fact, one may wonder if the Government is not just putting a clean sock on a dirty foot.

We have not solved any of the problems at Pearson International. We have not solved any of the problems all across this country as far as air traffic is concerned. We also have a public that is both inconvenienced and worried about its safety. I do not think we are getting into the nub and substance of the issues that face us.

In New Brunswick, we are concerned that budget cuts will affect a number of transportation industries. I am thinking particularly of budget cuts that the Government is talking about with respect to VIA Rail. If massive cuts take place, and we have all heard the rumours of a \$160 million or a \$180 million as far as VIA is concerned, we wonder if that will affect the safety of the VIA operation. We are very concerned that again safety will be sacrificed