

has publicly announced the intention of the Canadian National management to include in the next Canadian National budget provision for railway terminal hotel at Halifax. Railway hotel is what I have been working for, and I will continue to support it strongly unless private interests think fit to take on project.

Those were the words of the government: "unless private interests think fit to take on project". Did they take it on? They did.

Mr. RALSTON: Read the other two telegrams.

Mr. BENNETT: I have not the correspondence. This I take from the public press.

Mr. RALSTON: It is in the public press.

Mr. BENNETT: I have not seen the others.

Mr. RALSTON: You have made some study of it.

Mr. BENNETT: I made a study of it because I wanted to find out what the minister said on September 24, and on that date he told the people through a telegram, made public in a journal, that he had been working for a hotel project and would continue to support it strongly "unless private interests think fit to take on project". Those words are not mine. Now, did they take it on? The hotel is in process of being finished; it will be finished in the next few months.

Mr. RALSTON: I am asking you to read the other two telegrams.

Mr. BENNETT: I do not have them, but if the minister will hand them to me I shall be glad to read them. If I had them I would read them. This one I had copied this morning out of the Halifax Chronicle; I sent my secretary to copy it for me. If there is other correspondence, well and good; at any rate I have not got it. Now I desire to point this out to the government: this private interest, the Lord Nelson hotel, had sought subscriptions from various people throughout the country. Insurance companies have bought the bonds; the banks purchased the bonds; private individuals bought bonds, individuals in Halifax and other parts of the country bought preferred shares in Halifax and in other parts of the country; corporations doing business in Halifax put money into the venture. And how does that venture stand to-day? The windows of the hotel are in and the structure is in process of completion. I do not know but I am informed that the hotel will be ready for occupation by Trafalgar day this year at least, which is now only a little more than four months off. Therefore, before a single dollar has been spent on the other

[Mr. Bennett.]

undertaking we have this privately owned hotel practically completed. I thought the other day that some moneys had been spent on the other project, but I am informed that these moneys may be referable to the terminal and not to the hotel, because parliament had not given sanction to the work being carried on. The position, then, is this: Without any work having been done on our hotel, to be publicly-owned, this privately-owned hotel will be ready for occupation within the next few months, and we are now asked to put a million and a quarter into a public undertaking which will render that private investment a failure. My hon. friends may laugh and say, "Oh, well the Canadian Pacific can afford to do it. Sir Henry Thornton said they wanted to do it, and their directors have considered it". But here we have the language of a minister of the crown, "Unless private interests think fit to take on project". And they have taken it on; and now this house is asked to sanction putting into competition with that privately-owned hotel this public enterprise, on which no money has yet been spent. According to the report submitted by Mr. Pratt, the head of the hotel department, to Sir Henry Thornton, that privately-owned hotel, the Lord Nelson, will lose \$100,000 a year. One of the newspapers this morning is of the opinion that I pose as an expert in hotels. Now, I do not know anything about hotels except that I pay large sums of money, thousands of dollars, into them annually. I do know, however, that the expert upon whose judgment we have a right to rely says that it will lose \$100,000. So "that is the position with respect to that", to quote once more the language of the Minister of Railways.

I ask the government this question: Would a business enterprise put up another hotel in Halifax under these circumstances to compete against a new hotel just created? Would that be done in a city of 60,000 or less? We are now asked to spend a million and a quarter—or, according to the Minister of National Defence, \$1,146,000—so that we shall have in Halifax two hotels costing over \$2,000,000 altogether, one competing against the other. In other words, the taxpayers of this country will have to find a million and a quarter for the construction of an hotel to compete with a private undertaking carried out under the circumstances I have stated. We as a parliament are taking the money of the taxpayers as a whole and devoting it to the purpose of destroying an investment of part of our own taxpayers. That is what it amounts to. It must not be forgotten that the Canadian Pacific—I am carrying the figures in my head and I am of