

*Supply*

Member's problem is. He is still tied up in the 1950s policy of his Party. When that Party snaps itself out of that element, perhaps it will then understand why this Government has had to take the initiatives it has taken, and perhaps it will understand that we did not know just how bare the cupboard was at the time we were making assurances to Canadians regarding matters we would see initiated.

Those things of which the Minister of Transport spoke over many years in committee and in this House, are a matter of record. They are a part of our policy. I know the Minister of Transport will see that they are fulfilled when the opportunity prevails. However, he is not going to do it for the sake of doing it, for the sake of creating a much greater deficit and denying Canadians the employment opportunities which they so richly deserve and which they have been denied by the actions of the people across the way.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Mr. Speaker, again may I say to my hon. friend from the Kootenays that I was not asking the Minister or the Government to spend money for the sake of increasing the deficit. I was asking the Government to spend not only the moneys it promised but to spend at least those moneys which would be a sound business investment and which would allow a public need and necessity like rail passenger services or ferry services to function better and more efficiently.

**Mr. Mazankowski:** That is right.

**Mr. Benjamin:** The return on that investment would be recovered within a two, three or four-year period. That is all we are asking, Mr. Speaker. The new passenger equipment will pay for itself within three years. Instead, the Minister of Transport is going to continue on with the policies of his Liberal predecessors and keep forcing VIA Rail to refurbish and frantically try to get by with that old worn out equipment.

**Mr. Mazankowski:** Oh, no!

**Mr. Benjamin:** And we will have to go through another winter—probably another two or three winters—with the same thing all over again. The Minister has to order the equipment, but it is an investment. It will in subsequent years reduce the amount of subsidy that has to be paid to VIA Rail. I hate to sound like a free enterpriser, but surely that is sound business investment practice. If it happens to raise the deficit by that many millions of dollars more for the next two years or three years, so be it. At least it is a productive investment.

**Mr. Skelly:** Mr. Speaker, I believe it is relevant that another Hon. Member from British Columbia would have previously made this statement. However, in the Province of British Columbia the Social Credit Government has set a precedent for the kind of activity undertaken by the new Government in Ottawa, an activity which has virtually destroyed the economy of the Province of British Columbia. The Social Credit Government made the promise during its election campaign that it was going to practise restraint and revitalize the economy. But there is no province in this country which has been more badly harmed than the Province of British Columbia by the same

kind of activity which this Government is now undertaking. I say to my colleague that the same people who guided the Province of British Columbia on this path of destruction, Patrick Kinsella and Norman Spector, are certainly back here in Ottawa laying a path of destruction for Canada.

I would wonder, Mr. Speaker, about making cuts in transport, an extremely important public utility in this country on which people and businesses of this country depend. Perhaps those cuts should be referred to a committee before they are implemented by the Government? Rather than approaching it from a strictly ideological point of view, perhaps if we could examine the total budget over a period of time with the Department of Transport, we could find the cuts and economies which everyone desires.

**Mr. Mazankowski:** Would you show up?

**Mr. Skelly:** We would also like to see a situation in which the investments which are needed are also put in place. The kinds of promises which were made by that crew over there, and their candidates in the field, should be honoured.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure we will have an opportunity when we are dealing with supplementary estimates to raise the matter of the cuts with the Minister of Transport. I know he will want to appear. British Columbia is nothing more than a prime example of the symptom of the disease. When one reduces the deficit for wrong reasons, one increases unemployment. For anyone to say we must reduce the deficit in order to reduce unemployment has got it backwards. It is not how much the deficit is, but what the deficit is for, and if the deficit is for sound investment for which the Government will receive a full return, whether it is two years or 22 years. If the Government follows this mindless proposition 13 syndrome imported from California which was applied in British Columbia and Saskatchewan, then it will duplicate in spades what happened in British Columbia.

**Mr. Brisco:** What would you cut?

**Mr. Benjamin:** If I can have another half hour, by unanimous consent, Mr. Speaker, I can point out some cuts for my hon. friend.

● (1550)

In any event, you cannot have it both ways. When you bring in deficit reductions of this nature, you are going to increase unemployment. It cannot be helped if you follow that route. I suggest adding \$1 billion or \$2 billion more to the deficit now, which will be repaid over the next two or three years, makes far more sense.

**Mr. Mazankowski:** You said that five years ago.

**Mr. Benjamin:** You would put people to work, they pay taxes and government gets the money back.