

Hon. John J. Connolly: Honourable senators, my intervention will not be lengthy. First, I would like to thank Senator Benidickson for his lucid and crystal-clear explanation of a bill which has always been somewhat of a mystery to me, because it involves great boxcar figures and financial transactions of magnitudes much greater than the ordinary mortal normally has to contemplate. What he has done here this evening has been a credit to him and to the Senate.

I thank my old friend Senator Aseltine, who with his usual capacity for putting his finger on points of importance as well of interest, deserves our gratitude for the way in which he has spoken. I do not know whether he was upgrading or downgrading the position of the Leader of the Government in the Senate, but I can tell you that when Senator Aseltine graced this office it really was graced.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): I do not know whether honourable senators spend all their newspaper reading hours reading the *Ottawa Journal*, as I do for the most part.

Hon. Mr. Choquette: Why not?

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): However, this evening I wish to mention a competitive paper, the *Montreal Gazette* and especially its *Centennial Gazette*, which is part of the editorial page. Mr. E. A. Collard, a former editor of the *Gazette*, has been editing this feature, running on Saturdays in that very fine news organ in Montreal.

I wish I had last Saturday's issue here, as it spoke of some of the problems which faced this new country a century ago. One of the things pointed out was the importance of binding the country together with hoops of steel, with steel rails, and what a difficult prospect this was for a people who were so small in number, for a country which was so sparsely settled, which was at that time nothing more than a few scattered settlements and a ribbon along the border, and even that ribbon was broken in many places.

When we think of the prospect that the editorial of the *Gazette* of that time portrayed, and which Mr. Collard has quoted, the prospect that all Canadians of his generation faced, and when we think of what has been accomplished since then—even if we restrict it to the work done by the railways—Canadians generally can look back with great satisfaction, not only to the achieve-

ments of this railway and its predecessors, the other Government-owned railways, but indeed to those of the private railway, the Canadian Pacific Railway.

I know that over the years parliamentarians and politicians have risen in their seats and complained about many things, and in certain cases there have been causes for complaint about the management of railway affairs. But, by and large, without the enterprise and the courage shown by public figures, and by railway men, the progress we have made in this hundred years would not have been achieved.

I do not wish to make a general Confederation speech, but I believe it is due the railways to say at least this much about them.

Senator Aseltine referred also to the annual deficits we are called upon to review, and to the fact that there is not much information available to us. We get the annual statements promptly, not only of the Canadian National but of Air Canada and of the affiliated and associated organizations within this system. These are before us, and even though the bill may come too late for real consideration by parliamentarians—due in part to the protracted sessions we are having now—at least we know the position from year to year because we get the statements of what is being done in these Crown-owned companies.

What must be emphasized, however, is that through the years parliamentarians have become more and more apprehensive about whether the nationally-owned railway will ever get itself out of the financial morass in which at times it finds itself.

When I think of Mr. Collard's column and consider the situation and our prospects today, I for one feel optimistic that as time goes on, and our population of now 20 million continues to increase—I heard on the news tonight that we had a record number of 200,000 immigrants last year—and as the labour force grows, and as we increase our trade both at home and abroad, and imbue our transportation systems with all of the modern equipment and facilities that are available, we will see not only better but, I venture to say, more profitable days.

Again I am impelled to refer to one of the remarks made by Senator Hugessen to which I referred the other day when speaking of his regretted retirement. He was impressed with the fact that at times it was important for a country to incur debt in the interests of development, so that future generations would