

*Supply*

● (1705)

*[Translation]*

I think it is important to mention that Air Canada expects at least to break even and probably to make a profit. And the privatization of Air Canada took place during a recession. While other corporations were closing in Canada, Air Canada succeeded in becoming the great company it is today and, this year, it expects to break even or perhaps even to make a profit.

*[English]*

If Air Canada was able to do this during a recession, I am convinced that CN can do it in an economic upswing. I encourage all Canadians to show their interest in participating in an employee led privatization of CN.

I am not going to dwell on the past as my colleagues from the Bloc Quebecois are doing. I will not go over all the injustices they speak of. I may indulge a bit by saying that the repair shop in Capreol, a modern facility producing more efficiently than Joffre, was closed down in favour of the shop in Joffre, Quebec. As good Canadians we did not spend all our time crying. We sat down and tried to find ways of saving these facilities. We have not given up. The employees of these facilities are signing up. It is not a firm commitment to purchase shares in CN, but it is an indication of their willingness.

I urge Canadians, members of the opposition, all members of this House to seriously consider the benefits of privatizing CN.

As a former employee of Air Canada and as a retiree I know the pride and dignity employees develop in a company when, as in my case, you work for them for 25 years. In the case of the people of Capreol it was for three generations. When you speak of pride to a grandfather about how it was when he was on the railroad, he asks his grandson or granddaughter what it is like today. The pride you develop in a company is something you have to live. It is too easy to say that you worked for a company for a number of years and you either leave with a good package and love the company or leave with a lousy package and remember it forever with animosity.

In the case of Air Canada it used to belong to CN.

*[Translation]*

The employees of Air Canada and Canadian National are proud people. They are the ones who built the company. One criticism I would make of Canadian National is that if Canadians have come to think that CN is inefficient, that it loses money and makes bad decisions and if my research leads me to conclude that the decisions made by this company are good decisions that have allowed it to become profitable right after a recession, it must mean that the status quo cannot be maintained at CN.

*[English]*

Things must change. Governments have to sit back and try to understand and face up to what it is that a government offers its population. We struggle to offer our population the social services, assistance to the needy, care for the sick, food for people who are hungry, while putting millions of dollars into a company that can do better on its own. It is time Canadians faced reality. We do not print the money any more. Times are hard, but we are coming out of them.

● (1710)

The rail system forms part of our national strategy on the movement of goods and people. If the railroads have been inefficient in the transportation of people it is because of government legislation. Let us get those laws off their backs and allow them to compete through modern legislation face to face.

The competition will no longer be only between CP and CN. CP and CN must find partners. They must have the same tools to work with because their competition is south of the border. The competition is in the trucking industry. Indications are that the trucking industry can no longer maintain its past system of movement of goods. Our roads cannot handle it. Canadians realize they are subsidizing the roads in the same way we subsidized the railroads in the past.

It is difficult for that truck driver driving at four o'clock in the morning realizing he has \$200,000 debt on the rig behind him. I am a firm believer that if we plan correctly we can develop a viable system for the railroads in co-ordination and co-operation with the trucking industry. It is reasonable as Canadians to expect that everyone should participate and everyone should become a winner. The transportation of goods in Canada should be a partnership between the railroads and the trucking industry.

As I conclude I would like to repeat my previous comment. The Capreol Save Our Rail Committee has been working diligently. A few months ago its members were faced with the prospect of losing their jobs. This community is a wonderful town. I was at its Santa Claus parade last Saturday. You should see the closeness and the unity in that town.

In the same breath CP says: "We will offer you a dollar for your company and you will never lose a cent again, but one thing we will do the first day we own that portion of CN is we will close the northern line". We are not taking the attitude that we will bring government to its knees or we will bring CN to its knees. We are addressing this issue in a different, modern, Canadian, Liberal fashion. We are meeting and working together. We have opponents but we sit with them. We get to know them and we learn to work together.