

Canadian National Railways and Air Canada

impaired by the government's policy of periodically transferring to it bankrupt lines acquired because it was politically, and socially necessary to maintain their operation. Furthermore, in addition to the system's heavy burden in having to maintain unremunerative services, the government transferred to it all the debts of the constituent companies, which means in effect that the government transferred its own railway debt to the national system. As a result the CNR has been able to meet all its interest charges only ten times; any wonder the CNR claim they cannot pay fair and just pensions to its employees. Don Jamieson, then Minister of Transport, said about 10 months ago . . .

You will remember that this letter was written in March.

. . . that the government was going to look at the vast debts which the CNR employees of today are carrying.

I might add that not only are the employees or CNR carrying it, but the people of Canada as well.

Let's hope they do it soon.

It seems to me that the government of Canada should remove this handicap by taking over the almost \$2 billion debt of the CNR. As a nation, I do not feel we have any financial obligation to pay off the debts of bankrupt railroads. We do not have this obligation because governments are not known to pay off creditors in bankruptcy. This is one case in which the government has assumed an unusual obligation. Secondly, this ritual will not solve our basic transportation problems. Instead of voting more money to pay off old debts, our energies should be directed to rationalizing our total transportation system. State ownership of our entire transportation system appears the only long-term solution to obtain the kind of railways system required, especially in Canada's prairie region.

In a country like Canada, with a small population spread over a wide geographic area, transportation is a vital part of economic development. As such it should be controlled by the state.

May I call it five o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Central Nova (Mr. MacKay)—Public Service—Regional pay inequities—Reasons for not applying same principle to members; the hon. member for Richmond (Mr. Beaudoin)—Airports—Mirabel—Expropriation procedure—disparity in offers; the hon. member for Meadow Lake (Mr. Nesdoly)—Agriculture—Brucellosis—recommendations for control and compensation—government position.

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, notices of motions, public bills.

[Mr. Nesdoly.]

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

[English]

SPORTS

SUGGESTED ESTABLISHMENT OF FUND TO SUPPORT NATIONAL HOCKEY TEAM

Mr. Joe Hueglin (Niagara Falls) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should give consideration to the advisability of establishing a national endowment fund to which tax deductible private contributions may be made in support of a salaried Team Canada which would not only compete for Canada in international hockey but would also compete against local teams in all areas of Canada on a year round basis with proceeds from games played in Canada to be divided between Team Canada and the support of sports activities in the area in which the game is played.

He said: Mr. Speaker, last year in September two of the greatest competitive events which Canadians had the opportunity to witness were occurring at the same time. The first of these, in which many of us played an important part, was the election. The second, but first in the minds of the people of Niagara Falls and Fort Erie, was the hockey competition that was taking place between Team Canada and the team from the Soviet Union. Perhaps my fellow members of parliament did not experience the same reaction in their portion of Canada that I received. But as I attempted to knock on doors, the television set was on and I hesitated to break into the concentration. As I spoke to merchants, I found that their concern was about our team's position rather than about tax problems that they may have been facing.

● (1700)

Most important of all, my own concentration on the election was broken when I saw literally hundreds of the students at my high school following every play on a television set that had been established in the cafeteria. They were watching it with unified intensity in almost complete silence until a goal was scored either against us or for us. Canada's honour as a nation was, I believe, at stake last year. It was at stake in the minds of young and old, of Francophone and Anglophone, and of many who are not as fluent in either of those two tongues as they are in that of the land of their birth.

At that time, the idea of this resolution was born. It asks the government to give consideration to the creation of a vehicle that can serve as a unifying force in Canadian life, unifying in that it touches the interest of almost all Canadians of whatever age, economic status or origin they may be. This resolution is presented in my name, but its authorship must be given to many of the citizens of Niagara Falls and Fort Erie who discussed the subject with me last fall, and who really brought these ideas into being. The basic idea is that the government of Canada play a role in establishing a Team Canada. Beyond this basic point, there are many details which are included in the resolution upon which others more familiar with sports than I can no doubt improve. But if the basic point is accepted, no doubt the other points can be worked out satisfactorily to Canadians at least, although our sometime friends in the Olympic games may not find them acceptable.