

Oral Questions

that it wishes them to operate with the best possible management, directing themselves toward making a success of their enterprise and, therefore, in that sense paralleling the kind of operation which would go on in the private sector. We also indicated that where we believe a special duty should be imposed upon such a corporation we ought to quantify the cost of that special duty and pay for it so that it does not have to be melded by the Crown corporation into the fare structures or other rates charged to individuals in the operation of its business. These things together clearly, if directed to a Crown corporation along a path which at some time could lead to a consideration of whether some shares in some parts of it might be sold to the public, is a flexible way of financing as is done of course in other competitive sectors in the private sector.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, the minister took a long time not to answer the question. Considering the fact that CNR came into being just after World War I because a number of private railways went broke and wanted the people of Canada to bail them out, and considering that even the profits that CNR allegedly is going to make in 1976 are dependent upon a \$200 million subsidy from the people of Canada, will the minister assure the House that the government will not as a matter of policy sell off part of our great national railway system to the private sector after countless decades of subsidy coming from the people of Canada?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, that sounded more like an elaborate argument than a question. I presume the hon. member is not critical of the fact the railways were taken over at the time they were bankrupt and put together in one particular operation. Perhaps that demonstrates it was not for any great purpose of having a railway that we ended up in the railway business but because there was no other way than to bail out a particular series of railway operations. What the hon. member fails to notice is that the people of Canada as shareholders of a corporation like CNR may indeed benefit greatly if it has the flexibility in raising funds to not only borrow but to sell some shares in subsidiaries which, after all, is done by its major competitors.

● (1420)

I take it the hon. gentleman does not assume that when a corporation like the CPR or other large corporations sell shares in subsidiaries they are somehow giving something away to the public or to the buyers of those shares. They are entering into a commercial transaction for the good of the overall operation and the shareholders, and if anything were contemplated with regard to a Crown corporation it would be for the same reason—the good of the Canadian people who are the shareholders.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: If the minister is assuring the House that however the government plans to change the financing operations of the CN not one penny will be lost to the taxpayers by way of funds going out to private investors entering at this late point, we accept his answer. But so that we may gather the

[Mr. Lang.]

general intention of the government's overall policy, will the hon. gentleman assure us that in terms of other great public enterprises in this country—I am thinking, for example, of Air Canada—the government has no intention of selling off parts of these operations to the private sector, directly or indirectly, once they become wholly profitable?

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is a repetition of the previous question.

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[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

REQUEST FOR ELIGIBILITY OF WORKERS IN SMALL INDUSTRIES

Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

In view of the present dissatisfaction felt by some categories of unemployed who are told that they are not eligible for unemployment insurance, can the minister tell the House whether he intends to take the necessary steps in the very near future to remedy the situation with regard to the eligibility for unemployment insurance in some sectors such as agriculture, construction and commerce in general? I would like to specify that I am thinking here of the worker whose father owns an industry or a farm, and of the possibility for the father to insure those of his sons who work for him.

[English]

Hon. Jack Cullen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): I am not certain I understand the representation made by the hon. member—whether he is referring to training in particular skills or a particular enterprise or not. But I will examine the question, and reply.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

ALLEGED BLACKLISTING OF CERTAIN EMPLOYEES—ACTIONS OF MINISTERS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George—Peace River): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Would he inform the House whether at any time he received for his own personal perusal and action a document and list which was identified as an extra-parliamentary opposition list, and if so what action did he take to comply with the suggestions made on that list—actions against persons who are in the employ of the Canadian government and others?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have never heard of or seen such a list.

Mr. Oberle: I should like to direct a supplementary to the Minister of Supply and Services. Did he at any time have cause, in response to information which he might have received