

spirit and energy of Canadians to meet our transportation needs.

One hundred years ago, the driving of the last spike helped make our national dream a reality. The spirit of that national dream is alive in Canada today. We are a nation of builders; we take pride in having forged a country out of the rock and soil of our land. The challenges ahead are great; together we can conquer them with the boldness, vision and imagination which made this land a nation.

In conclusion, on this historic day I want to extend sincere congratulations to Canadian Pacific, its management and to all its employees across Canada, whose spirit, dedication and enthusiasm are an inspiration to us all.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, November 7, 1885, was a red letter day in Canada's history, when the CPR train travelled from coast to coast for the first time. Canadian Press reporter David Gersovitz commemorated this event in a very interesting article on the Canadian Pacific.

Ever since Canadian Pacific completed its first transcontinental railroad link, it has played and has continued to play a major role in the economic development of our country. Since that day 100 years ago, Canada's expansion has been impressive. The prosperity we have in this country would certainly not extend to all its regions without the major communication links provided at the beginning of the century by the railroad.

Interestingly, and I quote David Gersovitz:

In Canada, however, this project was essential—

—that is, building a railroad that would connect Canada from coast to coast was absolutely—

—essential to this country's development, something which could not become a reality without a transcontinental railroad link. Those who wanted a united Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific claimed that a railroad line cutting across the entire continent, across the formidable Canadian shield, would keep the West from being swallowed up by the United States.

It is a fact that to develop what we know today as Canada's five main regions, it was necessary to cross that formidable obstacle, the Rocky Mountains, and to reach the Pacific. It is thanks to the pioneer spirit and the enterprise of Canadian Pacific that this dream could become a reality and that Canada is a country stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and since that time, to a third coast, on the Arctic Ocean.

As suggested by the Minister, we should congratulate the administrators of the Canadian Pacific who have diversified their operations over a number of years. This corporation, one of the most important in Canada, is the property of a great many Canadian shareholders.

I want to congratulate both the shareholders, who represent a significant part of the Canadian population, the administra-

tors of the Canadian Pacific for their entrepreneurship, but also and especially the workers, not only those who have built the railway but also those who over the years have directly contributed to the success of that company.

Today being November 7, I cannot help being somewhat sorry when I think of the former employees of the Canadian Pacific who retired before 1978 with a lifetime pass as a result of their years of service for that company. They were used to travel with their lifetime passes which were unilaterally cancelled. I dare hope that, on this 100th Anniversary, the administrators of the Canadian Pacific will demonstrate their kind generosity for their former dedicated employees by announcing within the next few hours or days that they will return to these pensioners the passes which they certainly deserve.

● (1520)

[*English*]

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, as a third generation employee of Canadian Pacific Limited—my grandfather having started employment with Canadian Pacific Limited in 1904, followed by my father and then myself—I join with the Minister in his remarks. I only wish the Minister had had more to say.

It is true that this is an historic anniversary. However, there is also an historical record which all Canadians and Members of this House should be reminded of. The workers, the immigrants—who worked, for the most part, under slave-labour conditions—deserve more recognition. One thinks immediately of the Chinese labour involved in the building of the Canadian Pacific railway line. Scores of those workers died in the process. They had to pay a head tax and live like animals, and all for two bits a day. Had it not been for those workers, that line would never have been finished. Recognition has to be given to the contribution of those workers.

So, while this is an historic event, it also is an opportune time to be reminded of this historic behaviour of this corporation, behaviour that represents a century of corporate welfare.

As was said in 1880 or 1881 by the then Leader of the Official Opposition: "Since we are putting up all of this money, land, mineral rights, subsidies, and so forth, why don't we own it?"

And we are still doing it. This particular corporation owes over \$1 billion in deferred corporate taxes. It is a corporation that has got out from under commitments and agreements as to the type and amount of service that it would provide forever and a day, not the least of which was the agreement in respect of maintaining a statutory freight rate for the movement of grains.

The CPR has quite a record when it comes to bad corporate citizenship, but the act that takes the cake is the arbitrary cancelling of the passes of its own pensioners.

An Hon. Member: Shame!