

Canadian National Railways and Air Canada

these vast estimates before us in respect of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for the production and distribution of television programs, and on the other we find that years after most hotels and motels in this country began installing television sets the CNR was a holdout, and came along well after the others in providing what has become virtually standard equipment in most hotel chains in Canada.

● (1650)

As for the insignificant little key, that grotesque little red abomination which CNR hotels hand you every time you go in to register, I do not know who dreamed it up. Whoever it was, he should get a special award. For that the corporation should have its estimates cut to \$1. And, speaking of all the hundreds of attachments to keys I have seen in travelling across Canada and in many parts of the world, I have never seen one anywhere in the world which can match closely that of the CNR in sterility of design. No other attachment has aroused in me such feeling of coldness and lack of appreciation with regard to design. Without doubt, some great study was undertaken in arriving at a design which would be appropriate, attractive to potential CNR hotel customers and, in some way, enhance business. If that was the object of the exercise, it failed miserably, I have talked to a number of people about this minor item, and they share my view. The question is often asked, how can anyone do a study and then come up with something which is as basically ugly and unattractive as the CNR hotel key?

Mr. Foster: Now, start on the door mats.

Mr. Hellyer: I am glad the hon. member opposite mentioned door mats. I might have overlooked them. In my experience, many door mats were unsatisfactory. They were threadbare. So, too, were blinds and drapes in some cases. They gave you the feeling that you were going backward in time, not forward to some new and enlightened age. The impression was that you were going back in time, to an age when society could not afford and had not developed what is essential in the field of hotel accommodation, to the time when there were not standard products, unattractive as they are, which are available today. That this is so is tragic. I feel let down and disappointed as a Canadian taxpayer.

I felt, and still feel, that many of the natural locations of these hotels are extraordinary. As the hon. member for Mississauga said, the lands on which these hotels stand today are worth many times book value. They stand on very valuable pieces of real estate, in many cases real estate which should be put to better use. So, Mr. Speaker, I think we should look carefully at any proposal of Canadian National Railways for extending their hotel business. This is not their primary business. Their primary business is moving passengers and freight. Heaven only knows, they have enough trouble with that.

The Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) reminded us recently of the difficulties he has encountered in making sure grain moves to markets. As I pointed out the other day when I was so rudely interrupted by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), five or six years ago the CNR was doing a study on how grain might more efficiently be

[Mr. Hellyer.]

moved to market. The study looked into whether new terminal facilities are required, whether changes are required in methods of grading and cleaning, whether new equipment is required, and whether we should move to the adoption of unit trains for moving grain across the country. These are matters which are ultimately the concern of Canadian National Railways and their primary *raison d'Être*. One would think the company would turn their attention to things with which they are primarily charged. If they relieve themselves of responsibility in other areas which are peripheral, they can concentrate on establishing a first class transportation system in this country.

A few years ago when I was in Japan I had the honour of riding on that famous train, "The Bullet." I admit I was favourably impressed with the technological advance of those very up-to-date people. The Bullet was designed to provide comfortable, fast transportation for the Japanese. It is a decade ahead of any Canadian ground transport system for moving passengers. I think that organizations like Canadian National Railways and Air Canada should not be involved in fields which are not their primary concern. They should not attempt functions which can better be carried out by others, such as the operation of hotels, such as, in the case of Air Canada, going into the aircraft manufacturing business. We shall touch on this later.

The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. McKenzie) told us this afternoon that Air Canada finds it difficult to maintain its aircraft. How much more trouble would it experience if it found itself in the aircraft manufacturing business about which it knows nothing. As Canadian National Railways has been declared by Parliament to be a work for the general advantage of Canada, I hope it will live up to its responsibilities, concentrate on those functions which are legitimately within its purview and provide the Canadian people with the kind of extraordinarily good service they have a right to expect from their nationally owned railway.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Huron (Mr. McKinley)—Sports—Establishment of camps to train athletes for Olympics—Suggested use of abandoned Canadian Forces base at Clinton, Ontario; the hon. member for Brant (Mr. Blackburn)—Penitentiaries—Government action to alleviate shortage of psychiatrists.

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