

Mr. BENNETT: Not "thought were entertained by Mr. Pratt," but were entertained by Mr. Pratt.

Mr. RALSTON: My hon. friend said that the combined capacity is 400 rooms. My hon. friend is wrong.

Mr. BENNETT: That is what Sir Henry Thornton says.

Mr. RALSTON: The proposal is that this shall be a combined station and hotel, that there shall be 160 rooms, not 200, and the combined capacity of the two hotels will be 360 rooms, and that is I understand less than the present hotel capacity in Halifax to-day? Further than that my hon. friend the Minister of Railways mentioned this morning that there are indications already that the Lord Nelson hotel will be booked up to capacity. Let me read from the bond circular of the Lord Nelson hotel which corroborates that exactly. They say:

Already it is considered that the demand for such accommodation will be greater than the Lord Nelson can supply, without consideration of the stimulus such hotels invariably have on further travel.

I do not think there will be any doubt that with the statements of Mr. Silver concerning the Lord Nelson in the original prospectus and in the bond circular no gloomy views need be entertained as to the Canadian National hotel succeeding. My hon. friend overlooks that this is a station as well as a hotel, that there will be located at the terminals, where the steamship and the rail traffic all meet, a station and hotel combined to take care of the traffic.

I think my hon. friend realizes full well, as no doubt does this house, that the management of the railway have in view their experience in meeting competition from the other railway at Quebec, for instance, where large tourist parties have actually been taken from them on account of the Canadian Pacific Railway hotel there. They will soon have to face similar competition on account of the new Canadian Pacific hotel in Toronto, and there is the same experience in Regina, in Calgary and in Vancouver. And it does seem to me, sir, that it is only fair to the people's road, as I said the other night, that power should be given to the Canadian National Railways to compete in the matter of hotel accommodation in Halifax when it is so vital to traffic going all over the system. It does not concern Halifax alone. I presume I would be popular in some quarters in Halifax if I opposed this hotel, but I am not looking for popularity by so doing. But I believe

[Mr. Ralston.]

it is in the interests of the whole province of Nova Scotia that not simply one but both these great railway systems should be allowed to provide hotel accommodation which will be feeders to their lines not only in the province but all over Canada.

Mr. BENNETT: On page 150 of the evidence given before the select standing committee on railways and shipping there is the following:

Mr. Bell (St. Antoine): I was wondering whether there was business for two hotels in Halifax.

Sir Henry Thornton: That is a matter of opinion. I might observe for what it is worth, that the capacity of the two hotels under contemplation represents the combined capacity of the present existing hotels in Halifax. Without any reflection whatever upon those hotels, they have not been regarded as adequate, nor of a satisfactory character for the hotel trade in Halifax. In other words, this is a substitution of what might be described as really modern hotel accommodation, in an equal quantity to that which existed before, and which has not generally been regarded as of a modern character. It only represents about three hundred rooms.

It only represents about three hundred rooms Sir Henry Thornton says; not 160.

Mr. RALSTON: What does?

Mr. BENNETT: This new hotel.

Mr. RALSTON: My hon. friend is wrong. It means two hotels.

Mr. BENNETT: It could not be two.

Mr. RALSTON: There cannot be any question about that.

Mr. BENNETT: I am reading from Sir Henry Thornton's evidence.

Mr. RALSTON: But there must be a mistake. The plans for the Canadian National Hotel are for only 160 rooms.

Mr. BENNETT: Sir Henry Thornton told the committee:

It only represents about three hundred rooms.

The Lord Nelson hotel represents 193 rooms. That is the position in regard to that. My hon. friend said that the Canadian National was preparing to meet hotel competition in Calgary. I do not see it in the estimates. Is that settled?

Mr. RALSTON: No, I said they had had experience of trying to meet hotel competition in Calgary.

Mr. BENNETT: I am grateful for that. I did not so hear it.

Motion (Mr. Robb) agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.