

sands of people would borrow money to build a new home or repair their existing homes.

Every city in this country has long waiting lists for senior citizens homes and chronic care beds, but the Government is more concerned with reducing the deficit. Thousands of people could be put to work in this area to meet a genuine need that is the responsibility of the entire public. Instead, the Government sits here like the Liberals did with their nineteenth century concepts on how to solve problems. They sound like R.B. Bennett, Herbert Hoover and Mackenzie King all over again. Why should we not declare a state of national economic emergency and challenge the nation at every level including the private sector, the agricultural industry and the trade union movement to take action as we did during the Second World War? We have done it before and it can be done again.

It is not necessary to sit here and worry about what is happening with the American economy. I am not concerned about what is happening with the American economy. I am concerned about what we do with our economy. History has shown that we can take care of our own affairs. The Government should not simply cut deficits for the sake of cutting deficits just to please the head of the Bank of Canada or any other bank. I am not concerned about how they feel. In fact, I would rather that they felt worse, because whenever they feel bad usually most of the country is working.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Questions or comments?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, it is quite obvious that the Hon. Member has never met a bottom line or a payroll. I doubt very much if there is anyone on that side who has met a payroll. It is quite obvious from their type of rhetoric. That is the kind of irresponsibility one gets from people like that.

Mr. Althouse: You never borrowed money when you were in business?

Mr. Mazankowski: Yes, I did, and I met a payroll too.

Mr. Althouse: So have we.

Mr. Mazankowski: The Hon. Member talked about user pay. I take it from his comments that he is implying that the public Treasury should pay an increased share of the costs of transportation relative to what is being paid today.

I ask him in all honesty if he could enlighten me as to how he would handle, for example, the cost recovery in the Canadian air transport administration, which was at 58 per cent in 1980 and is now down to 34.4 per cent. How would he handle the marine sector, which has a cost recovery of roughly 26 per cent; the surface transport, at 17 per cent; CN Marine, at 19 per cent; VIA, at 23 per cent; and the Coast Guard, at one per cent?

I am not trying to belittle the point. I want to get a forthright answer from the Hon. Member, because the fact is that the percentage of cost recovery is on a continual decline and worsening. Does he not consider it to be a responsible

move to do everything we can to reverse that trend by getting greater productivity, efficiency and utilization on the one hand while looking at the options of increased support from the users of those systems?

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the questions of my friend. I will endeavour to answer each one specifically, beginning with ferry services. I have always believed, as has my Party, that the ferry service is part and parcel of our national highway and rail system. If it were logical to charge tolls for a ferry system, it would be equally logical to have tolls for the use of part or all of the Trans-Canada Highway. Those ferry services should be considered part of the road network.

Mr. Mazankowski: What about the recovery on the Trans-Canada?

Mr. Benjamin: I do not know if we have ever had full cost recovery on the Trans-Canada Highway, or any other road for that matter.

Mr. Mazankowski: But 19 per cent?

Mr. Benjamin: It seems to me that something which is a full public responsibility should be shared by the entire nation through our tax system. We all share in the cost, whether we use it or not.

Mr. Mazankowski: Are you saying there should be no tolls?

Mr. Benjamin: I say that the ferry services should be toll free because they are part and parcel of our highway system. That is not a new idea on my part and does not happen to be part of some socialist ideology.

Mr. Mazankowski: Why did B.C. not do it when the Hon. Member's Party was in government?

Mr. Benjamin: That is a good question. Many of us asked them why they bothered raising the fares.

With respect to airports, if there was full cost recovery or the cost of recovery was substantially increased, what would that do to the users, particularly small users? If there was full cost recovery, we might as well make the airlines build, maintain and operate the airports. However, I do not think that there would be very many airlines in business.

Mr. Mazankowski: Is 58 per cent too high?

Mr. Benjamin: I do not think it should go any higher.

Mr. Mazankowski: It is now 34 per cent.

Mr. Benjamin: At 58 per cent, not only will the airport tax increase, airlines will have to increase fares, because they will not give that money to the Government without trying to recover it. Therefore, it is self defeating. It is either an essential public service or it is not. If the Government does not see it as an essential public service, it should go for broke for a 100 per cent cost recovery and make the users pay the entire shot. At the same time, let the truckers and bus companies