

national economy, it does not make good private enterprise economic sense to have competing railroads. They are a public utility and provide a service everyone has to use, directly or indirectly, whether they like it or not. If it were logical to have competing railroads, it would be equally logical to have competing highways, sewer systems, water lines, power lines, and telephone lines. However, anyone suggesting that would be locked up.

It is a longstanding Party policy to take over Canadian Pacific Limited. This will continue, I am sure, for a long time to come, until it happens, as it will one day. It may well be a Liberal or a Tory Government which will have no choice but to take it over. We suggested a way of doing this during the debate on the Crow Bill last year. In return for any capital funds given to CP by the Government of Canada, the Government would take common voting stock in the company. What is wrong with the taxpayer as a public investor having an opportunity for a return on that investment the same as a private investor? It makes good business sense and protects the taxpayer's investment.

We need to put that enterprise under public ownership, Mr. Speaker. Some of it we might sell off. I do not know if we would want to stay in the hotel business. I am sure we could make a bundle selling off Marathon Realty. That would be a nice change for the taxpayer. However, given the transportation needs of this country, Canadian Pacific Limited, in all of its transportation aspects, should be under public ownership as a Crown corporation and answerable to Parliament.

**Mr. Blenkarn:** Mr. Speaker, in view of his statements, would the Hon. Member agree that the CNR should sell off its hotels, which, as he knows, lost \$2.7 million last year? Is it his view that the Government should be running hotels and supplying accommodation for the less fortunate, as the Chateau Laurier does? Or does he think we should build more CN hotels so we can lose more money? Is that the policy of his Party?

**Mr. Benjamin:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member did not ask me that question in any year when CN hotels made money.

**Mr. Blenkarn:** When did that happen?

**Mr. Benjamin:** There were not very many of them. Private as well as public transportation companies, airlines, and railroads all over the western world have hotels as a necessary adjunct to their transportation system in order to keep their customers as long as possible. What is wrong with that? CN was looking at privatizing its hotels and shopped them out to the Hilton chain to operate them for CN. That was a disaster and so CN has had to take some of the management them back. The hotel business, whether owned by a Crown corporation or privately, has been going through some tough years. That is no reason to condemn public ownership of hotels. If it is, I suppose there is no reason either why Canadian Pacific should own hotels, because that is costing shareholders money. But the CPR directors are not accountable to their shareholders

the way CN is to Members of Parliament. I would be inclined to keep the hotel operation.

I note there are various rail, airline and other sundry operations in Europe which own, in whole or in part, hotels, resorts, condominiums and shopping centres, you name it. It is strange that it is all right for the private dollar but not for the public dollar. That kind of double standard has been prevalent too long under successive national governments. What is so holy about a private dollar and unholy about a public dollar? Public dollars do as much or more good than private dollars. If a hotel as an adjunct to a transportation system is a good and sensible part of the operation to deal with tourists and the travelling public, then it should have some hotels. Why not?

**Mr. Blenkarn:** Mr. Speaker, I am interested to find out that the railways are carrying passengers again. It was my understanding that the passenger service had been designated to VIA Rail. Perhaps the Hon. Member could tell us about the express operations of CNR. For example, CNR has lost considerable money over the past several years on its trucking services. Would he have them sell those trucking services? As he knows, private truckers all make a profit and pay corporate taxes and so on. Does he think it is the business of the Government to own trucking companies?

**Mr. Benjamin:** Mr. Speaker, first I should tell the hon. gentlemen that VIA Rail, even though it is a one dollar item in the Estimates, is classed as a class of railway. Under the laws of Canada and under the North American Association of Railroads, it is a class 1 railway.

Do I think CN should sell its trucks? Mr. Speaker, I do not think they should, because no one would buy them right now. It would be a dumb time to try to sell them if they are losing money, unless you plan on giving them away to some friends. I do not think my hon. friend is like that. There might be some Members on the Government side willing to do that, I do not know. But, again, where a Crown corporation like CN uses trucks to take advantage of the highway system and the various laws and regulations in each province which enables it to do it cheaper than it could do it by rail, that is one thing. But if it is at the same time hauling heavy bulk commodities by truck, that is economic stupidity. I would prevent CN from long distance trucking iron ore and heavy steel products and what not. That is not the place for the trucking industry. I would prevent CN from entering that area of transportation which any transportation economist will tell you is just sheer nonsense. It is a loser, and it has been finding that out the hard way.

We had the bitter experience in Saskatchewan of trucking potash. The province had to rebuild a highway and then the potash mine, which was privately owned, had to agree to pay so much money to rebuild the highway. In the end both the taxpayer and the potash mine lost money. That is dumb. You do not haul heavy bulk commodities on the highway for long distances at high speed. It makes no sense. No government of any political stripe would countenance that, given the experience we have had.