

Speaker, that we will do our utmost to promote and defend the interests of Canadian producers.

[English]

REQUEST FOR COUNTERVAILING DUTIES

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for that answer. Will he suggest to the Minister that he stand firm against the EEC retaliatory threats? Has the time not come to take retaliatory action against them? Is it not now time for Canada to establish countervailing duties against this highly subsidized beef coming from the EEC?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Blais (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the EEC retaliatory threats. It is important for the government of Canada to make sure that whatever measure it may take will not have disastrous consequences, because if it should bring the issue before the GATT, win or lose, it could find itself in a difficult situation. The high level of imports could be raised even higher, which would be disastrous. One should also understand that the government of Canada must also defend the interests of Canadian producers in other areas, for example honey and maple syrup producers in this country. We will make every effort to defend the interests of Canadian producers.

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[English]

PUBLIC SERVICE

REQUEST THAT DOCUMENTS SIGNED WITH UNIONS BE TABLED

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. Ever since the Minister announced what he calls the new era in labour management relations in the Public Service, I have been asking him in the House to table the memoranda that he has signed or negotiated with the Public Service unions. The Minister has persistently said no to my request. In fact, the documents have been leaked to the press. Public servants are quite concerned. Superannuates are very disturbed. Will the Minister table those documents today so that people can rest at ease, read them, and understand them clearly?

[Translation]

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, in the first place, I should like to point out to my colleague that those documents which have been described in the media as being signed agreements are agreements in principle which are the basis of the negotiations now under way. I will be pleased, Mr. Speaker, to table those papers in the House today because there is nothing confidential about them. We have to understand that they lay down the basic principles to be followed in the bargaining now under way and which I hope will be completed in the near future.

Oral Questions

PENSIONS

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, in order to allay any fear and apprehension among retired civil servants, can the minister assure the House that they will be represented on the pension management board? Will he make sure that the 50,000 retired Canadians will be well represented?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I can say that I have already held discussions with the advisory pension committee in which the pensioners are represented. I have had some discussions with the unions on the matter. And it is the wish of the government to have in the new advisory committee representatives of—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. de Cotret: It is absolutely true, you were there. You can argue but we clearly intend to promote the representation of pensioners in the committee looking after the plan which at last, after so many years, will be financially sound.

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TEXTILE INDUSTRY

ESTABLISHMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE—
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion.

The day before yesterday, Canadian spokesmen for the textile industry held a press conference to ask for a toughened Multifibre Arrangement to stem the tide of imports from low-wage countries which is disrupting our markets.

In view of that problem, is the Minister considering the establishment of a parliamentary committee to give Hon. Members an opportunity to study the matter and see for themselves how important that industry is to Canada's and Quebec's economy?

[English]

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member's suggestion is very interesting. I think it might be fitting for me to remind him that we do have a study under way at the present time concerning this industry. We have certain other representations to come from industry sources. When we have those it may well be that, rather than setting up a special committee, we could at least consider making a reference to the appropriate committee so that the matter could be looked into as the Member is suggesting.