

## PENSIONS

## EFFECT OF BUDGET—CONSULTATION INQUIRY

**Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Does the Minister recall his Government's statement in the Throne Speech last November:

—a priority goal of my Ministers will be to breathe a new spirit into federalism and restore the faith and trust of all Canadians in the effectiveness of our system of government.

A constant process of consultation and co-operation must be restored.

If the Minister recalls that statement, how does he square the lack of any kind of consultation not one scintilla, with senior folk, with respect to the changes he has made by deindexing old age pensions, with the Statement in the Speech from the Throne?

**Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Hon. Member has read the throne speech because it was valid then, and it is valid today. I want to tell the Hon. Member as well that he should not say there was not one scintilla of consultation, or that there is no continuing consultation with senior citizens. He should not make that statement without looking at what an individual Member, or this Minister, for that matter, is doing. That kind of statement by the Hon. Member is simply not the case.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** There was no formal consultative process. There was no system to get an opinion from senior folk or their organizations.

REQUEST THAT PROVISION AFFECTING PENSIONS BE  
WITHDRAWN

**Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, in light of what is taking place across the country among senior folk and their organizations, does the Minister think it is fair and sensitive to have senior citizen pensioners dangling in the wind all summer, fall, and next winter? Will he now say that he will not have senior folk go through that kind of insensitive process, and withdraw the deindexation proposal now?

**Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, I remind the Hon. Member of the statements made by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons yesterday. Those statements are on the record, and that is the position of the Government. I refer the Hon. Member to those statements made by the Prime Minister.

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[Translation]

## THE CONSTITUTION

## SUPREME COURT JUDGMENT

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister and it has to do with the historical judgment rendered today by the Supreme

## Oral Questions

Court. I find altogether surprising and unacceptable the fact that the Deputy Prime Minister, with all the human resources at his command, could not find enough time today to acquaint himself with a judgment which I consider historical. It is unacceptable!

**An Hon. Member:** A 200-page document!

**Mr. Gauthier:** Not 200 pages, 88 pages. Mr. Speaker, it is symptomatic of his lack of interest in this matter.

Can the Deputy Prime Minister tell us whether his Government has already contacted the Manitoba Government before today's judgment, precisely to avoid chaos and take the necessary corrective measures in anticipation of the Supreme Court judgment?

[English]

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, I rather regret that I do not have the 15-second wisdom that is possessed by the Hon. Member. I think he will agree that the kind of historic decision to which he refers is very lengthy indeed and deserves very careful and thorough study.

In the meantime, I am assured that the judge refers to a process that has to be triggered to ensure that the federal Government is involved in a judicial process with respect to the time which is to be set during which the transition is to take place. I see no need for instant action. However, whatever action in whatever timeframe is required, after that careful consideration has been given to the matter, will be taken by the federal Government.

Let me repeat once again that I am sure no Hon. Member of the House would want to take advantage of the timing of this situation to use any question with respect to the official languages of this country as a political opportunity to create any divisions. That is certainly not the purpose of anyone in government.

[Translation]

CONSULTATIONS WITH MANITOBA GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY  
OF FRANCO-MANITOBANS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, I quote from page 68 of the English version:

[English]

The period of temporary validity will not apply to any unilingual Acts of the Legislature enacted after the date of judgment.

After today. Therefore, Manitoba needs attention now. It needs consideration now, and it needs help from the federal Government to translate the documents. Will the Deputy Prime Minister—

[Translation]

—can the Deputy Prime Minister give us the assurance that this very day he will get in touch with the Manitoba Govern-