

● (1410)

PARLIAMENT

THIRTEENTH MEETING OF CANADIAN AND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARIANS

Mr. Clément M. Côté (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, it gave me great pleasure as a delegate from the Canadian Parliament to attend the 13th Annual Meeting of Canadian and European parliamentarians.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we were cousins, and today we have become friends. After having attended the workshops and the discussion meetings together, we will be in a better position tomorrow to understand the wishes and needs of one another, and to work together at reaching solutions that will be profitable for both groups.

* * *

SOCIAL SECURITY

SITUATION OF ELDERLY AFTER PRESENTATION OF BUDGET

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal-Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I would like to give all Members in this House, and to you too, Mr. Speaker, an idea of the monthly budget of senior citizens from whom the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) is requiring a sacrifice.

To start with, they get \$605.20 a month. Their rent is \$240 per month; hydro \$21.47 per month; heating \$57 per month; telephone \$17; fire, theft and life insurance \$20.83; water tax \$5; food \$216.50 per month, or \$50 per week, or \$2.40 per meal.

All that is left after deducting the above items is \$27.40 per month. Out of those \$27.40 per month they must buy clothes, drugs that are not covered by health care, dental care, glasses, household maintenance, appliance repair, transportation, newspapers and recreation.

Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate it if the Minister of Finance, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) and the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) would tell senior citizens where they are going to cut their costs. Will they be cutting on meals, will they cancel their insurance?

Mr. Speaker, I feel it is invidious to ask our senior citizens, who built this country, to make still more sacrifices.

* * *

ENERGY

SITUATION OF GASOLINE RETAILER

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Duvernay): Mr. Speaker, a very special case has just been referred to me. The owner of ten gas stations in Hamilton, Guelph, Oakville, Mississauga and Kingston, a well-established independent distributor who has

Oral Questions

been operating for eight years with 120 employees and a volume of sales of over 14 million gallons a year, has been in a very precarious situation since 1982. After being forced to close seven of his stations over the past three years, he has been dealt an even harder blow. Even though this might seem hard to believe, this distributor must purchase gas for his business from the Sunoco company, his main supplier, which sells him this product 1½ cents more than to its own gas stations.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I must say that this operator has already suffered heavy losses and is just about ready to simply close down. In his own words, and I quote:

[English]

It is inconceivable that such a thing happened in a country supposedly supporting individuals' rights and freedoms. There is no control, and independents have their heads under the guillotine.

There is a grave problem in southern Ontario. At the moment majors can lower their selling price, or otherwise provide their subsidiaries with special support of some kind, and independents are left hanging there in the situation where they are losing their shirts, not their shorts.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

PENSIONS

INDEXATION—ELECTION STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have been waiting for some time to ask a question of the Prime Minister relating to the Budget. It is a question that has been put to him before in this House, to his Minister of Finance, and to the Minister of National Health and Welfare repeatedly.

Last July 26 in Sherbrooke the Prime Minister swore that he was totally committed to:

—reinstatement complete indexing of old age pensions to the actual cost of living.

Those were his words.

Why has that promise been broken in the Budget? He must have been listening to what our senior citizens and, indeed, what the country have been saying, from one end to the other, about this broken promise to our retired people and the elderly in Canada. Will the Prime Minister use this occasion to confirm his promise that he made to the people of Canada last July, and reinstate indexing of old age pensions?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, one of the serious problems facing the elderly, and all Canadians, is the state of the public finances.