

Oral Questions

Mr. Friesen: Rather than depend on a sanitized report by the Inspector General of Corrections, will the Minister call for a full, open public inquiry into the conditions and the calamitous situation that exist in the Correctional Service of Canada?

[Translation]

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I am keeping a very close watch on the problems at the Archambault Institute. Four investigations are now being conducted by the Inspector General, the police, the coroner and the Correctional Investigator who is also doing his jobs at Archambault.

In view of all the enquiries that are now being held, I can see no justification for adding another public enquiry at this time.

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[English]

PUBLIC SERVICE

APPLICATION OF RESTRAINT PROGRAM TO PENSIONS

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the President of the Treasury Board which arises out of testimony which he gave to the Senate Health and Welfare Committee concerning Bill C-133, the act affecting the Public Service pensions and the application of the six and five program to that pension. At that time the Minister indicated that he would consider the Committee's recommendation to provide a threshold at the poverty level below which the recipients of superannuation whose total income was their pension, would be excluded from the six and five requirement. Has the Minister done that and, if so, what are the results of his undertaking with respect to this matter?

Hon. Herb Gray (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, this is something I would have to consider in consultation with my colleagues in Cabinet. In my view it is something we should do in the context of the debate on the Green Paper on reform of the pension system in Canada generally.

Madam Speaker: May I ask Members to conduct their private conversations at a little lower level. It is beginning to be very hard to understand what is going on.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): It must be because it is spring, Madam Speaker. This is the first nice day we have had.

DELAY IN MAKING DECISION

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question. The Minister has indicated in his answer that he has not yet consulted his colleagues with respect to the matter. I would remind him that he undertook with the Senate on January 27 that such consultation would take place. Is there any reason for the delay in this matter? Is it absolutely the policy of the Government that we have to wait for the outcome of a parliamentary Committee which is

studying another report, which is a report on another report, in order to deal with this matter which is very important to some Public Service pensioners?

Hon. Herb Gray (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, I have been considering a number of issues connected with Public Service pensions, including that mentioned by my hon. friend, but they all relate to what might well be broad ranging issues connected with that plan. I think this is something that has to be the subject of careful consideration. One of the things to consider is whether this should be dealt with apart from considerations of the pension system available to Canadians generally.

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RAILWAYS

CROWSNEST PASS RATE—PROPOSAL TO VARY RATE ACCORDING TO WORLD GRAIN PRICE

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): Madam Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. In an earlier reply to a question put by the Hon. Member for Dauphin the Minister indicated that he was in a negotiating mood, or that he was always in a negotiating mood.

In terms of dealing with the problem of the Crowsnest Pass rate, the feeling on the Prairies is basically that the rate should be tied to the world price of grain so that it would rise or fall depending on what grain was selling for on the international market. Organizations like the Manitoba Pool Elevators have come out in support of this, as have a number of other organizations. Can the Minister indicate whether the Government is actively considering this as an alternative, or is it considering an amendment to the legislation that the Minister will introduce?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I thought that, in answer to a question put by the Hon. Member for Crowfoot a couple of Fridays ago, I went as far as I could on the subject. Some people thought that I might have ventured a bit too far. The idea which I expressed then was that obviously this was a concept, this was a wish, this was a desire, which seemed to find its way in the West quite consistently at this time. I expressed surprise that it was not brought up at the Gilson exercise at the time, but strangely enough it was not. It seems to have gained momentum now, and I indicated the Government was aware of that and could not be, I said, insensitive if there was a great request for it, but the request must be accompanied by a number of positive steps, because in a matter as complex as this, you cannot give everyone 100 per cent of what he is looking for. I was inviting people, therefore, to rally around that concept and leave aside some of their other wishes for example, the inclusion of other products, the elimination of variable rates, and all kinds of other matters which together constitute what is referred to as the "Crow" question.