

Oral Questions

● (1500)

[English]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there is no new emergency in connection with railway operations in Quebec. As a matter of fact, the changes in personnel which were contemplated or suggested several months ago have been gone into thoroughly with me by the Members who represent the area.

I am glad to see the Hon. Member taking an interest in something other than pornography.

[Translation]

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, for local workers it certainly is a crisis when they lose their jobs.

INQUIRY WHEN NEW MINISTER OF STATE FOR (TRANSPORT)
WILL BE APPOINTED

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Prime Minister. When is the Prime Minister going to appoint a new Minister of State for Transport who will be able to deal more specifically with transportation problems in Quebec, considering that this key position has been vacant for almost three months? When is he going to fill this important position?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: I should like to advise the House that I will recognize the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie on two questions, followed by the Hon. Member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso and the Hon. Member for York East on single questions.

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[Translation]

PENSIONS

INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT PREPARED TO INTRODUCE
BILL TO INDEX PRIVATE PENSION PLANS UNDER FEDERAL
JURISDICTION

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

The Minister is aware that the Government of Ontario has formed a task force to look into the possibility of indexing private pension plans that come under the province's jurisdiction.

Could the Minister inform the House whether he would be prepared to table, as soon as possible, a Bill that would be aimed at indexing private pension plans that come under federal jurisdiction, namely those in the areas of communications, interprovincial transport and financial institutions, to ensure that when employees who are now paying into a private

pension plan are retired, they will not become any poorer because of inflation? Is the Minister prepared to follow Ontario's example?

[English]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member will know about the difference of opinion on the indexing of pension plans within the Ontario Liberal Government. A number of cabinet Ministers have expressed different points of view publicly on it, as he is aware.

In respect of our Government, he should be reminded that we made a number of changes which improved the pension system, by not only changing the RRSPs, but also the RRIFs and the PBSAs.

[Translation]

INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO UNDERTAKE
COMPLETE REFORM

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, the Minister is trying to recall the mini-pension reform he carried out. It was not a real pension reform to help people.

Does the Minister intend to proceed and introduce genuine pension reform, first of all, by correcting the unfair treatment of people who are single, separated or divorced and are not entitled to the spouse's allowance; second, by allowing for the indexation of private pension plans under federal jurisdiction; and third, by calling a meeting of the provincial governments to urge the province to index private pension plans as well?

[English]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member does not know what he is speaking about. There have been major changes. I mentioned the RRIFs, the RRSPs, and the PBSAs. We have made changes to the Canada Pension Plan which are as dramatic as the introduction of the CPP in 1966. We also made changes to the spousal allowance.

If originally it was so wrong, why did they not make changes when they were still in government? We made changes. Now, after the changes have been made on the spousal allowance, they say it is discriminatory. If it is discriminatory now, what about when his Party was in office?

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HARBOURS AND PORTS

SMALL CRAFT HARBOURS—AULD COVE WHARF

Mr. Lawrence I. O'Neil (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. The Minister is aware of the deterioration of Atlantic Canada's harbour facilities. The Auld Cove wharf is but one example of inadequate and dangerous facilities.