

will have to welsh on some of the commitments we have made to NATO. Finally, in the way of parliamentary approval for use of Canadian forces abroad, the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson who said in the House:

—if a request is made involving the use of substantial numbers of Canadians abroad, we would bring the matter before Parliament before any final decision is made.

I ask for reassurance on this point. I sincerely hope that the parliamentary secretary, who has had some three weeks to consider the matter, will assure the House that it will be brought to Parliament before any final commitment is made. I hope the government will let me know how many troops are involved and whether we will notify our NATO allies that we will be incapable of carrying out our other commitments if we carry out this commitment.

Hon. Ron Irwin (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): As the hon. member is aware, the Camp David accord was signed in the fall of 1978 by Egypt, Israel and the United States, and strongly supported by Canada and many other countries. As a result of the Camp David accord, the peace treaty was signed on March 26, 1979 by Egypt and Israel. Under the terms of that treaty, Israel was to withdraw from the last third of the Sinai in April, 1982. There would be a deployment of UN forces and observers. However, failing the UN force, the U.S.A. was to establish and maintain the force itself. By May, 1981, it became obvious that the UN security council was unable to agree in providing a force; therefore, Egypt and Israel agreed to the establishment of a multinational force and observers.

We discussed Canada's position with the force with many countries. As evidenced in the past, we are always available for this type of operation, but we have not been officially asked to participate. Therefore, no commitment has been made. When questions are asked in the House as to how long the force will be there, the number of men and how much equipment will be involved, these questions are hypothetical.

The hon. member asked a very important question as to notification of the House. In the past, approval of the House has been sought when participation in a peacekeeping operation involved a substantial Canadian force. I think this has been the tradition in the House.

On the question of U.S. control, we have no agreement; but the guidelines so far are that the force commander will be a Norwegian lieutenant-general. He will report to a civilian director general who, in the first instance, will be a U.S. military citizen. Ultimately, the director-general will be under the auspices and responsible to the Egyptians and the Israelis.

As far as peacekeeping anywhere under U.S. control is concerned, the answer is no, the Canadian forces have not been under U.S. control in the recent past nor do they intend to be in the future.

• (2210)

Outside of the UN auspices, in the past we have participated in similar forces such as the International Commission for

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Supervision and Control in Indo-China, and also under the auspices of the UN there was the Golan Heights and the UN Truce Supervision—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please.

RAILWAYS—PENSIONS OF RETIRED WORKERS. (B) REPORTED PURCHASE OF GULF OIL STOCK BY CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS PENSION FUND

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg-Assiniboine): Mr. Speaker, earlier this year I raised questions regarding the pensions of retired workers of both the CN and CP railways. My question was directed to the then minister of labour. Rail pensioners are amongst the lowest compensated pensioners in Canada. Some former employees are receiving such measly increases as \$4 per year, and some receive pensions of only \$115 per month. I asked what the minister was going to do to correct this disgraceful condition. The Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin), as I pointed out at the time, has made his position perfectly clear: he will do absolutely nothing to assist them in their time of need, and he claims that it is up to the Minister of Labour to do something.

I have pursued this matter in standing committees and I had an exchange of letters with the Minister of Transport and with the Minister of Labour, to no avail.

I have also pointed out in motions in the House that rail pensioners have had to put up with such measly increases as \$77 over 19 years. This amounts to the grand total of \$4 per year or 33 cents per month, resulting in \$265 per month pension rate. A 33-cent increase does not go far against the odds of new record inflation rates of 12.6 per cent, a 15.2 per cent increase in food costs and an 80 cents per gallon increase in the price of gas. We are talking about rail workers who retired prior to 1972.

Earlier this year the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Bockstael) pointed out to me that the steady improvements in the fund's earnings resulting from such investments will allow CN to reduce its unfunded liability and increase its capacity to pay existing and future pensioners. He said that to reduce investments and make shortsighted pension increases is a sure way to pension bankruptcy, and that independent actuaries would confirm this.

This answer confirms that the Liberal government has no intention of assisting these CP and CN pensioners who are now in their seventies and eighties, Mr. Speaker.

I received a letter recently from the Minister of Transport in which he stated:

The published financial statements for CN's pension fund indicate that the fund first acquired oil and gas holdings in 1979 and that at the end of 1980 these holdings were valued at about \$54 million. This represented about 2 per cent of the valuation of the CN pension fund at that point.

I wanted information about how pension funds would be used. Some of these moneys should have been used to increase pensions. That would have not bankrupted the pension fund.