

Oral Questions

minister say when he intends to announce what the government proposes to do to see to it that those already retired get an increase in their pensions?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is aware that a lot of the report puts some considerable pressure on the CPR with respect to upgrading pensions for those already on retirement. I am convinced this is something the union leadership is concerned about, even though they are not presently in the work force. I am hopeful the union leadership will intend to do something about this in the next round of negotiations.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that neither the CPR nor the CNR has provided any escalation of pensions in 1977, will the government put pressure on these two railways to take action to increase the pensions of their workers already retired without any further delay?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, when we are involved with the railways and the unions, in order to keep a satisfied work force,—and the work force here is an excellent one—it is always our intention to try to do all we can to ensure that the working conditions are adequate. That should be a sufficient answer for the hon. member.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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● (1500)

[Translation]

SOCIAL SECURITY

POSSIBILITY OF RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT ON PENSIONS WITH UNITED KINGDOM—PROGRESS OF NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Seeing functionaries of the Social Welfare Department of Great Britain were present in the Speaker's gallery last week, can the minister tell us whether that visit took place in the context of the signing of a reciprocal agreement with Great Britain, which I so often advocated, providing the indexation of British pensions to recipients living in Canada?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): The answer is no, Mr. Speaker. Still, I must indicate to the hon. member that the officials of my department did meet British functionaries about two weeks ago, and that negotiations were very encouraging. There will be further exchanges of documents in coming weeks and I think we can foresee another meeting early in the fall. I trust therefore that I shall be able to bring good news to the hon. member at that time.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, on a supplementary. Can the minister give us a set date, or even an approximate date, for the signing of such an agreement?

Mr. Lalonde: As far as Canada is concerned, Mr. Speaker, we are ready to sign an agreement tomorrow morning, but our British colleagues have run into financial difficulties they want to analyse. I hope we can reach an agreement in the fall, but I am unable to give a specific date. Again, I point out that the initiative in that regard lies in the hands of my British colleagues.

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[English]

AGRICULTURE

INDUSTRIAL MILK—POSSIBILITY OF CUT IN QUOTA—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the hardships which the dairy farmers of Canada experienced as a result of quota reduction during the past year, and in view of the rumour that the Canadian Dairy Commission may recommend a further cut in quota, will the minister approve the quota cut if the dairy commission recommends it?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. By virtue of the terminology of the question, it is hypothetical.

INDUSTRIAL MILK—POSSIBILITY OF CUT IN PRODUCTION

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture as well. It relates to the Canadian Dairy Commission and its proposed 4 per cent cutback in milk production which will exclude Canadian dairy farmers from a \$7 million industry and will cost Canadian dairy farmers \$7 million. Can the minister tell us whether on the agenda of the milk supply management committee, which will be meeting later this week, there is an item relating to a possible cut in production for the present dairy year?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): I know of no such item, Mr. Speaker. No information has been given to me about such a cut. I am meeting the Dairy Commission tomorrow, but no suggestion of a cut has been made to me. The latest documents I have seen were those available at the meeting of provincial ministers in Victoria and no suggestion of that kind was made then. I would be very surprised if such a course were contemplated—if it were, it would be because of something which had happened very recently. I would point out, however, that it is the supply-management committee which has the responsibility for making these decisions, and it would have to be pretty sure it was making the right decision before it took action along the lines suggested by the hon. member. It is not the Minister of Agriculture who makes decisions of that kind.