

Pearson Development has already made it clear that it will not take any action to block the redevelopment of Pearson International Airport.

Honourable senators, if that was not enough, in the Ontario court case *TIT2 v. Her Majesty*, the Canadian government's statement of defence and counterclaim, which includes the affidavit of John Desmarais, says in Article 172:

...the Plaintiff's claim, and the Defendant...

— the government —

...admits that the airport contracts were repudiated on or before December 15th, 1993.

Then again in Article 173, the government states:

...the Plaintiffs...

— the Pearson consortium —

...have conducted themselves consistent with acceptance of the repudiation, and on the basis that the airport contracts are at an end for all purposes other than the claim for damages.

My question is this: Is there not a contradiction here? The government lawyers say there is no impediment. Yesterday, Transport Canada said that there is a contradiction. The Pearson developers have said they will not take any action to block redevelopment of the airport. Time is passing. That being the case, has the minister or any of his officials approached the Pearson consortium regarding the cancellation of the lease agreement between the federal government and TIT2 and, if so, have these negotiations been ongoing?

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I shall take the honourable senator's question to my colleague to get an expansion on the answer the senator has already received.

TREASURY BOARD

POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Eymard G. Corbin: Honourable senators, my question is directed to the Leader of the Government in the Senate. The story is making the rounds these days that, sometime in the New Year, Treasury Board President Art Eggleton will place a bill before the House of Commons giving MPs — and I repeat, MPs — the right to opt out of the parliamentarians' so-called generous pension plan.

Does "member of Parliament" in this instance include senators, as I think it should, or is that proposal designed and tailored specifically for members of the House of Commons?

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): I thank my honourable friend for his question.

As the honourable senator knows, there has not yet been a response on the question of pensions by the government or by the President of the Treasury Board. I will certainly draw my honourable friend's question, and his supporting remarks, to the attention of Mr. Eggleton.

AGRICULTURE

WESTERN GRAIN TRANSPORTATION— BACKHAUL TO THUNDER BAY—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Leonard J. Gustafson: Honourable senators, my question is directed to the Leader of the Government in the Senate. The backhaul of grain to Thunder Bay from Winnipeg was mentioned some time ago, and the government indicated, through its minister, that that situation would be solved. However, according to the news the other night, it still has not been solved.

This process is not only an embarrassment to all of the grain-handling workers but also to the Wheat Board and to the farmers. People in general on the prairies are concerned that this process is continuing at tremendous expense. What does the government intend to do about this situation?

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I thank my friend for his question. Senator Gustafson knows that the Minister of Agriculture also has expressed very strong concerns about this process.

Senator Berntson: He said it would be fixed.

Senator Fairbairn: It is his intention to end that process. As far as timing is concerned, I will seek further information and get back to my honourable friend.

Senator Gustafson: Honourable senators, it seems to me that it would be better even to pay the railroads, and not move the cars back and forth, congesting the system. They must be wearing out the cars, going through the manoeuvre of transporting grain from Winnipeg to Thunder Bay, and then moving it back to Winnipeg. It is quite an operation, let me put it that way. Certainly, a solution must be found; the situation is almost a joke.

Senator Berntson: It is a joke.

Senator Fairbairn: Honourable senators, I agree with my friend that this is a situation which must end. It does not make sense. The Minister of Agriculture, I can assure you, is very actively cognizant of the situation, and is moving to a solution as quickly as he can.

DELAYED ANSWER TO ORAL QUESTION

Hon. William J. Petten (Acting Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have a response to questions raised by the Honourable Senator Prud'homme on October 25, 26 and 27, 1994.