

Oral Questions

Now Preston Manning and his retreads are preaching to seniors to give their inheritance to the party instead of to their loved ones. This reformed tire company is on its way to the grinder. It will all end up as tar and asphalt from which it came.

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CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring the deplorable situation faced by CNR pensioners who have suffered 30 years of non-indexed pensions to the attention of the House.

In 1986, a subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Transport unanimously recommended, among other things, that the pension fund could and should take inflation into account. It also recommended that the surviving spouse should receive more than 50 per cent of the retiree's pension.

To date, none of the recommendations have been addressed in the spirit which the committee intended. The CN pension fund has a total value of over \$7.25 billion, and yet the pensioners and their families who gave their lives to the railroad are forced to try to exist on pensions which are woefully inadequate.

The surviving spouses' benefits must be raised. In fact, if they were raised to the standard level, most of these widows would not have to receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement. It is time the CNR started treating its past employees and their families fairly and stopped forcing the Canadian taxpayer to subsidize CNR pensioners.

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[Translation]

MEMBERS' EXPENSES

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, today, like thousands of other Canadians, I read Gilles Paquin's article in *La Presse* under the heading: "MPs and senators spend more".

For months I have been saying we could cut down on our expenses in Parliament, considering the present state of the economy, but this article confirms there has been no real attempt to cut expenses in a number of areas.

I have repeatedly suggested to the Board of Internal Economy how we could save taxpayers' money. In 1991 I was the first Canadian member of Parliament to disclose my expenses, and I take pride in showing my books to the people in Abitibi. They know I have nothing to hide.

I would like the Board of Internal Economy of the House of Commons to send me, as soon as possible, a copy of the budget for MPs' expenses for 1992-93.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

TRADE

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for International Trade. We have asked the government to resort to retaliatory action against unfair trade practices by the United States, following incidents involving softwood lumber, Honda cars and magnesium. Today we are told that cabinet will meet to reassess the kind of retaliatory action Canada might consider. Since cabinet is considering such action, does this mean the government admits that the agreement it negotiated is no good? Is the government admitting this agreement contains no effective remedy against unfair practices by the United States?

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I do not accept that at all. In fact Canada, as a result of the free trade agreement with the United States, is the only country in the world that has access to a binding dispute settlement mechanism which is better than what is available in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the GATT.

Under the GATT, countries that are found guilty of any illegal trade actions can put off taking action, can put off remedying the problem that they have been found guilty of. That is not possible under the free trade agreement. That is the benefit of the dispute settlement mechanism under the FTA. I repeat, Canada is the only country that has this.