

Oral Questions

• (1450)

[Translation]

COLLÈGE MILITAIRE ROYAL DE SAINT-JEAN

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence has repeated many times that the government would soon make public its decision on the future of the military college in Saint-Jean, on the basis of consultations and recommendations, especially from the Government of Quebec.

Can the minister tell us his intentions on a new military role for Saint-Jean and report on the outcome of the negotiations with the Government of Quebec?

[English]

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, my colleague the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, who is ill today, is looking into the alternate uses of the Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean but I wish to reaffirm that the government in its budget of February 22 did announce that we will be moving to one college which will be located in Kingston, Ontario.

I made a statement yesterday in the House and the member's colleague from Charlesbourg replied on behalf of his party in terms of how we will make Kingston much more bilingual than it is already. I also announced that the commandant of the Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean, General Emond, will start in July of this year as the new commandant of the Collège militaire royal located at Kingston to ensure that there is an equitable transition and to make sure that we do indeed continue the very excellent tradition of having a bilingual officer formation in the Canadian Armed Forces.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean): With reference to the minister's statement yesterday, Mr. Speaker, he announced two plans: one to make the military college in Kingston bilingual and the other concerning curricula.

Can the minister tell us how much these measures will cost and can he confirm that these additional costs will cancel for all practical purposes the meagre amounts he intended to save, starting next year, by closing the military college in Saint-Jean?

[English]

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we have covered this a number of times in the House.

We expect the closure of Royal Roads Military College and the Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean to accrue about \$35 million annually to the federal treasury. There are one-time

costs associated with the reformation in Kingston but that was all in the budget statement. The hon. member should read that.

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CANADA PENSION PLAN

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Last week the minister's parliamentary secretary confirmed that Canada Pension Plan premiums will have to be increased from the current 5.2 per cent of earnings in order to cover payments to our aging population. In fact at the current rate in less than 25 years these premiums will eat up 10 per cent of every worker's paycheque.

Has the minister looked at this problem? What is he doing to keep premiums in check?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I want to report to the hon. member that I have read the press reports.

It would be very important to refer him to a study or assessment that was undertaken by the Canadian Institute of Actuaries which noted that the financing of the Canada Pension Plan is on an actuarially sound basis. The formulas are there.

We all understand that as the population changes and as we go into the future where there will be a larger number of Canadians who are in retirement age, there will be some pressures on the Canada Pension Plan. That is the reason why my colleague, the Minister of Finance, announced in the budget that we will put forward a paper that will make some assessment and analysis of what those kinds of issues will be. We will have an opportunity for a public debate, assessment or dialogue on what some of the resolutions or responses should be.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, we look forward to that public debate.

The surplus fund or contingency fund that the minister mentioned is presently invested in low interest provincial government bonds that subsidize the debt of provincial governments.

What is the government doing to ensure a better return on investment so that Canadians can count on having the pension they spend their whole lives contributing to?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, just to put this matter in its proper context, the managers of the fund have maintained throughout that this was not an unexpected development of the contingency fund, that it would have some pressures.