The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will recognize the Hon. Member from Renfrew and then the Hon. Member for Egmont.

Mr. Hopkins: I would like to say to the Hon. Member who has just spoken that I, too, would like to welcome him back into the House because we were first elected to this place on the same day, and the casualty rate for the class of '65 has been rather severe over the years.

I was quite moved when I heard the Hon. Member say that we cannot borrow for the future, that we have to get the debt under control and so on. I do not think there is a Member in the House who does not feel that the debt has to be brought under control. But let us not make any mistake about it. When the Government that he is supporting at the present time came to power, the national debt of this country was $170 billion. At some point between now and this fall it will pass the $340 billion mark, which is exactly double in five years. Does he not think it would have been better if his Government had taken their own rhetoric seriously? They are always talking about how they are good financial managers and what a tremendous job they have done managing the finances of Canada over the years. This is at a time when they have doubled the national debt in five years, equal to the amount of the first 117 years since Confederation.

Does the Hon. Member not think it would have been better if the Government had put some of its own rhetoric into play four and a half years ago when they came into power, and really meant what they said instead of coming down like a sledge hammer on everybody because the Government suddenly realizes they are in serious trouble? The Government is in serious trouble because it has had no planning in the interim since it came to power.

• (1700)

Mr. MacDonald (Rosedale): Again, I greet a member of the Class of '65 on my return. I have to say to the Hon. Member for Renfrew (Mr. Hopkins) that he is on very shaky ground if he is trying to make a case that we have not changed the direction of a Government that he supported for more than 15 years, and in this instance attempting to further those objectives in this first Budget in the new Parliament. If I hear the Hon. Member correctly, I hear him saying that perhaps we should have been even stronger. I hope when we get to vote again on the Budget that the Member will join us in voting for this Budget, as I hear him *sotto voce* expressing. I welcome that support. I come from a profession which always welcomes those who come with penitence, and if that is what this is about, I have no problems with that.

Mr. McGuire: I now represent the riding that the Hon. Member represented for 15 years, and I would like to ask the Hon. Member why he has so much sympathy for the environment, and assisting those peoples in the Third World, and then callously demonstrated on a television interview last week in Summerside that he has no sympathy for the people he used to represent.

Mr. MacDonald (Rosedale): First, I would like to congratulate the new Member for Egmont (Mr. McGuire). It is a great constituency to represent, and I am sure the Hon. Member will enjoy representing it. I am troubled that he would significantly misrepresent what I said. I would be happy to sit down with the Hon. Member and look at the transcript of that television program, and also several other interviews I did while I was in Prince Edward Island.

I did not go there for the express purpose of discussing that matter, as the Hon. Member knows. I thought that I owed it to the people of that part of Prince Edward Island, and indeed all Islanders, to advise them of the basis on which the decision was taken, and also give what I thought was some helpful advice. In case the Member missed the advice, I will briefly repeat it.

From the time I was first elected in 1965 I have stated that the base at Summerside has been a bit of a time bomb. If the Hon. Member has not already heard, he will find out that National Defence has tried to close that base for years. Many efforts have been made to maintain it, by both provincial and federal Governments. I can tell the Member that it will be very important in this critical period not to play politics with a matter that has consistently received the support of all people in the province, and always to look at the alternatives that might support the base not in a partisan manner. If the Member is, may I dare say, irresponsible enough to turn it into a partisan situation, he will do his constituency and the people of Prince Edward Island no good service.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. On debate the Hon. Member for Okanagan—Shuswap.