

These petitions come mainly from Shippegan, Le Goulet and Caraquet.

These petitions, Senator Murray will be delighted to know, were signed on April 2, this month. In all, 139 citizens are still protesting against a tax they rightly consider unjust, regressive and anti-social.

It is quite amazing that they go on signing petitions about a measure that became law over two years ago. No doubt these petitioners are already seeking redress from the next government, which will be more attentive to the people.

[English]

QUESTION PERIOD

THE BUDGET, 1993

CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL INDEBTEDNESS— REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen: Honourable senators, may I remind the Honourable Leader of the Government in the Senate of an exchange that we had last December on Canada's international indebtedness and, in particular, the discussion that we had on the proportions of the provincial and federal public debt held by foreigners.

• (1410)

At that time, I asked whether we could have some information on the proportion of the current federal deficits as financed by non-residents, and the Leader of the Government had stated that he might be able to give me that information. It would be timely if I could have that information in the next few days.

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I note that today the honourable senator has put a Notice of Inquiry on the Order Paper for the purpose of discussing the 1993 budget. I assume, therefore, that he would want this information before speaking, and I will do my best to get it for him within the next 24 hours, if at all possible.

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE— PROTECTION OF CANADIAN TROOPS

Hon. Jeremiah S. Grafstein: Honourable senators, for the second time in seven days John Burns, a distinguished reporter with the *New York Times*, reported that Canadian troops are at risk and in harm's way in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Mr. Burns formerly worked as a reporter for the *Globe and*

Mail, and recently received a Pulitzer Prize for his articles on the conflict taking place in that area.

I quote from an article that he wrote which appeared in today's *New York Times*, and states:

...there have been deep anxieties about the risks to which the Canadian troops have been exposed. In effect, 146 soldiers from the Royal Canadian Regiment, together with a dozen United Nations police officers from other countries, are all that stand between the 30,000 residents of Srebrenica and the besieging force of several thousand heavily armed Serbian troops.

Can the Leader of the Government advise the Senate what steps are being taken by the Government of Canada to protect Canadian troops and to ensure that they are not, through mere negligence, placed in harm's way while they pursue their United Nations peacekeeping duties?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): No, honourable senators, I cannot do that today, and would not try to do it in any event in an extemporaneous way. I will ask my colleague the Minister of National Defence for a report.

RELIABILITY OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT

Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I have a supplementary question on the same subject. There were some discussions previously regarding the equipment being used by Canadian forces in Yugoslavia, notably the APCs, armoured personnel carriers, and I asked a question of the minister in that respect. Statements had been made that these were unsafe vehicles, and that they were not of a calibre to protect the soldiers inside.

I know that, since then, the discussions have been continuing on that matter. I would appreciate it if the minister could bring us back a report on that matter in view of the fact that, since the questions were asked, at least one of the vehicles overturned and there was a loss of life and, certainly, serious inquiry at that time.

Was there a problem with the equipment, or simply with the way in which it was handled? In other words, was the overturning purely an accident or is the equipment defective?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I think I recall that my friend's original question was responded to in the course of "Delayed Answers". The Deputy Leader of the Government tells me that if that is not, in fact, the case, it will happen today a bit later.

With respect to information on the more recent incident that the honourable senator is seeking, I shall ask my colleague for a report.