

• (1650)

I want to say a word this afternoon about defence measures. In a National Defence Committee meeting on March 17 the Associate Minister of National Defence (Mr. Dick) replied, in answer to a question I put to him about where the 6 per cent increase in defence that they had promised throughout the election campaign was, "We have no record of having made that promise. If you can find anything, I wish you would let me know".

Well, I found it, Mr. Speaker, and put it on record in this House by way of a statement under Standing Order 21 on March 27. I told my research person at the time that I would wait a few days until the Government had one of its members reply to that because it could not allow that to stand unanswered. Sure enough, last Wednesday the Hon. Member for Northumberland—Miramichi (Mr. Jardine) got up in the House. I was surprised that that member got up and made the statement that he did, because I know him as a man of integrity. He is a retired member of the Canadian Armed Forces. In reference to me, the Hon. Member for Northumberland—Miramichi said:

When he referred to three newspaper articles, the Hon. Member implied that they contained mention of, to use his words, promises and commitments. These words are nowhere to be found in direct connection to anyone involved with the Government.

I will begin by referring to *The Toronto Star* of July 31, 1984, which was about five weeks before election day. There is an excellent picture here of the Hon. Member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Andre). The article reads:

Under a Tory government, defence spending growth "should be 6 per cent for the next few years," Andre said.

Further on the article says:

The national defence budget is estimated at \$8.78 billion for 1984-85—

The article goes on to list the other budgets. I will now refer to the London *Free Press* of August 6 in which an article reads:

Last July, Conservative defence critic Harvie Andre suggested that not even four per cent would suffice. Annual increases after inflation of up to 6 per cent would be required, in his judgment, to bring existing level of armed forces up to a reasonable degree of combat readiness.

Surely these reporters in Toronto and London are not making all this up. The article continues:

In last February's federal budget, defence expenditures were projected to total \$11.15 billion in 1987-88, up 27 per cent over last year.

That did not happen, Mr. Speaker.

In the *Chronicle-Herald* from Halifax the following statement is to be found:

Dartmouth Tory MP Michael Forrestall said that if a federal Liberal government needs cash, one of the first places it will look to get that cash is its defence budget, adding a Progressive Conservative government would look lastly at its defence budget for funding of other programs.

The article continues:

The Budget—Mr. Hopkins

Mr. Forrestall said in an interview Friday that defence spending is an important priority of the Tories, and the PCs would look at a defence budget increase of 6 per cent.

There is nothing wrong with that. He was only repeating what the defence critic of the day said.

After reading these quotes from the Hon. Member for Calgary Centre who was the defence critic during the last election, from the Member for Dartmouth—Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall), and from the Associate Minister of National Defence, how can the Hon. Member for Northumberland Miramichi get up in this House and say that "these words are nowhere to be found in direct connection to anyone involved with the Government"? Is the Hon. Member for Calgary Centre not involved with the Government? I thought he was in the Cabinet. I believe I have made my point on that issue very clearly. Why are Hon. Members spending their time denying election promises which they did in fact make? It is on the record.

The Hon. Member for Northumberland—Miramichi must have been embarrassed to be asked to stand up in the House and defend his Party's pathetic record on defence policy. I know it must be difficult for such an honest man to tell Canadians that the great rhetoric of the Tory Party in the 1984 election campaign with regard to national defence and many other items has remained that, just plain rhetoric. After listening to the Hon. Member for York Scarborough I know it is still going on.

Let us look at the actual record of the defence budget because I want to make it very clear in the record. In 1980-81, the real growth in the defence budget was 3.2 per cent after inflation. In 1981-82, the real growth was 3.1 per cent. In 1982-83, the real growth was 5.3 per cent. In 1983-84, it was 6.4 per cent. That is what the Tories promised, but that was done under the Liberal Government which was castigated by the Tories for it.

In 1984-85, the real growth was over 8 per cent. In 1985-86, the first fiscal year for which the Tory Government was responsible, the real increase in national defence fell to minus .2 per cent. In their first year in office they had a decrease of .2 per cent after having run all over the country the year before promising members of the Armed Forces, veterans, Canadian business people, and Canadians at large that there would be a 6 per cent real increase after inflation.

In 1986-87, there was about a 2.75 per cent increase. In the present year, the increase will be no more than zero per cent and may even end up being a negative increase. There is a great possibility that there will be negative growth in the defence budget for two out of three years the Government has been in power and only a 2.7 per cent increase in the other year. Yet, throughout the summer of 1984 the Government duped Canadians by telling them that it would provide a real increase of 6 per cent. Every Canadian, and certainly those in the Armed Forces, will remember that promise.