

erroneous. The EDC does not have a financial offer outstanding at the present time. It expired as of December 31. Consequently I cannot verify the figures to which the hon. member alludes.

TIMING OF CONTRACT

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Does the minister think it appropriate to lend subsidized dollars at a 10 per cent interest rate to Russia at a time when our allies are implementing sanctions against Russia as a result of the Russian atrocities in Poland and Afghanistan?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, there is no question of our lending money to the Soviet Union. I think what the hon. member is mistakenly trying to express is a loan by the EDC to a Canadian corporation which, if successful, would create 16,500 jobs in Ontario Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia. We regard this as being in keeping with the policy of NATO at this time. If the NATO policy changes, our policy will change as well.

Madam Speaker: I see the Leader of the Opposition is rising, but question period is over. I have to recognize the hon. member for Victoria on a question of privilege.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

MR. MCKINNON—COMMENTS BY MR. LAMONTAGNE DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Madam Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege arising from some of the remarks made by the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Lamontagne) a few minutes ago. He said that I had recommended to the good people of Chatham that the Canadian Forces base at Bagotville should be closed. It is correct that I advised the people of Chatham that they should put all the pressure they possibly can on the government to retain their base, which is absolutely vital to their economy. I suggested that the decision that possibly the minister has made to close Chatham and keep Bagotville open must have been made for reasons other than strategic reasons. I pointed out to the people of Chatham that the Chatham base is much closer to the east coast and the flight of the Russian Bear bombers down to the east coast than is the base at Bagotville. There are really two questions involved in this. The first is whether either base should be closed.

Madam Speaker: Order. It seems the hon. member is entering into debate. I will let him continue for another little while, but I ask him to tell me what his question of privilege is. From his note it seemed that he wanted to correct a statement made by the minister. That might be a point of order rather than a question of privilege.

Point of Order—Mr. Clark

Mr. McKinnon: Madam Speaker, I will not require more than another moment or so. The other question is whether he has decided to close the right base, if indeed they must close one base. For reasons of the mileage that is involved, the minister and the government have to make a decision as to whether the main threat is manned bombers coming over the North Pole or whether they want to do surveillance of the Russian planes flying up and down the east coast.

If it is the first one, which is a rather unlikely scenario, that is uppermost in the minister's mind, he has a reason for closing that base, I suppose. However, if it is the second one, which seems more likely, he has no reason and he has misled the people.

Madam Speaker: Order. The hon. member is debating the question. This is not a question of privilege.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

MR. CLARK—CLARIFICATION SOUGHT OF COMMENTS MADE BY MISS BÉGIN

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I believe the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) is still within range of my voice and will perhaps resume her seat. I rise on a point of order that would allow her to confirm or clarify a remark I believe I heard her make during the question period. I believe I heard the minister indicate that her estimates in the blue book for payments to the provinces will increase next year by 13.5 per cent. If the minister did not say that, I would like to have the record set straight. If she did, I would like to have it confirmed.

Madam Speaker: Order. The right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) will recognize that that is distinctly a question further to some of the questions asked in the House. If the minister wants to correct a statement she has made, she is perfectly free to do that using the means at her disposal, either by stating it in the House or, if it is not substantial, she can make some corrections to the "blues". If there is an error in the figure, she can make a statement in the House to correct that. It is up to the minister to determine whether she wants to make a correction to her statement.

Mr. Clark: Exactly, Madam Speaker. The only reason I raised the point of order was that the minister was out of the House and may well have not understood what she said when she said it. Indeed, she may have intended that. I wanted to extend to her the opportunity to correct the record.

Madam Speaker: Order. The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition knows that one member cannot force another member to correct a statement which that member has made in the House. It is up to the member to do that. The right hon. member has made his point. The minister is free to do what she wants.