

*Inquiries of the Ministry*POSSIBILITY OF REDUCED FUNDS CAUSING
REDUCTION IN ARMED FORCES STRENGTH

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of National Defence whether the formula of the current dollar level for the defence budget means that manpower will be laid off because of inflation and—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have the impression that the question as asked is—

Mr. McCleave: It was not asked in that way.

Mr. Speaker: I would think it was not asked in an acceptable form in that it gives the impression of being argumentative.

Mr. McCleave: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I am simply asking whether as a result of the current dollar level the axe will fall on weaponry programs or on the men and women employed by the Department of National Defence. This question is of serious concern to my area and I think it should be answered.

Mr. Cadieux (Labelle): Mr. Speaker, if I may try to answer that question, which I would call hypothetical, I might say it is obvious that the effect of a fixed budget for three years in a period of escalation might possibly result in some erosion. Of course, it is our hope that if this happens it will happen through normal attrition and not through forced attrition.

[Later:]

NATO—POSSIBLE CHANGE IN CANADIAN
PROPOSAL AT BRUSSELS RESPECTING
PHASED REDUCTION

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question of the Minister of National Defence. I understood from his statement that certain proposals of Canada with respect to a phased reduction of its military forces in Europe are now under discussion by the military section of NATO. Are these the proposals which the minister first placed before his colleagues at Brussels, or has there been some change in the proposals as a result of the meeting last week?

Hon. Léo Cadieux (Minister of National Defence): There was no change, Mr. Speaker. These are the proposals and the concept that I advanced at the NATO meeting.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Roughly, what is the timetable that

we may expect? How soon will the minister be able to tell the house what definite decision has been reached with respect to a reduction of our European forces and when this will come into effect?

Mr. Cadieux (Labelle): Mr. Speaker, I think I did indicate a moment ago that unfortunately I am not in a position—and I am trying to be as honest as possible, like always—to indicate when it would be possible for me really to unravel the plan that we have submitted or the one that would be suggested or accepted. This depends on the nature of the negotiations that are going on. As I indicated, these have to go on at different levels and it may take some time before they reach the ministerial level. I have always pinned my hope on the fact that I could before the recess do something about it, but I am afraid I will have to disappoint my hon. friend. This is, unfortunately, the situation.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister of National Defence accept my condolences for serving as Minister of National Defence and attempting to carry out the instructions which the government is trying to work out for this country?

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

INDUSTRIAL INCENTIVES BILL—REQUEST FOR
CONSIDERATION BEFORE SUMMER RECESS

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Privy Council. Will the minister give the house the assurance that Bill C-202, the industrial incentives bill, will be called before the house recesses for the summer?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member will understand, this very much depends upon the progress made generally in respect of the business of the house. It is, as indicated, the wish of the government that it should receive early treatment.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion whether he will make a statement on motions tomorrow in response to suggestions made by hon. members for an interim, short term, crash program for the province of Newfoundland in lieu of a long term program, and whether this short term program would fit logically into his long term program which has not yet been announced?