

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**THE BUDGET**

## IMPACT OF CLOSURE OF CF BASE AT SUMMERSIDE, P.E.I.

**Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont):** I have a question for the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. Last October 15 in Summerside, Prince Edward Island, the Prime Minister stated:

In the future Canada will do more not less for all of you. Our Government is committed to social justice and fairness for Canadians.

How, Sir, can the Prime Minister reconcile that statement with the devastation he has just inflicted upon the Town of Summerside and the surrounding communities? How can he possibly justify the closure of the largest institution in western Prince Edward Island, the only military base in the province? This will have the effect of ruining the economy of western Prince Edward Island and will devastate its fragile economy.

**An Hon. Member:** Shame!

**Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, the actions that were taken through the Budget show the concern of our Government for the ever-increasing debt this country faces.

**Mr. McGuire:** For Summerside?

**Mr. McKnight:** No Government has given more consideration to the defence of this country. But to have economic sovereignty, we must address the problem of the debt at this time.

The operations and closure of some seven bases and stations and the reduction in size in seven others are made so that with those savings we can provide the men and women who continue to serve Canada with the equipment they need, while addressing the ever increasing debt which the country and the Government inherited in 1984.

**Mr. McGuire:** Mr. Speaker, as you know, Prince Edward Islanders are celebrating the 125th anniversary of the first meeting which led to the Confederation of this country. But how, Mr. Speaker, can you celebrate the loss of 3,000 jobs? How do you celebrate the loss of \$90 million leaving our economy? How do you celebrate the death of a small community?

I ask the Prime Minister to reconsider his decision. Am I expected to be the last Maritimer to stand up and tell

my friends and neighbours, when the last person leaves Summerside will he or she please turn out the lights?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member, I am sure, has a long memory. He will realize that Summerside was there before the base was created.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Wow!

**Mr. McKnight:** That being said, in order to address the needs of Canada in fighting the ever-increasing cost of interest on a debt and continuing to provide men and women who serve Canada with the equipment needed, this Government has to take very serious steps.

The closure of Summerside and the savings resulting amount to over a billion dollars in the planning year, and that Member is a member of a Party whose Leader asked for \$15 billion to be taken out of the defence budget of this country.

**An Hon. Member:** In submarines not in Summerside.

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**THE BUDGET**

## REQUEST FOR BUDGET WITHDRAWAL

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. It is the position of the Opposition that a leaked Budget is a tainted Budget and must be withdrawn, whether the leak is through ministerial responsibility, irresponsibility or non-responsibility, and whether the acts are criminal, negligent or innocent.

If the RCMP investigation confirms that benefits were or might have been obtained through advanced knowledge whether or not anyone is prosecuted, will the Minister withdraw that Budget?

**Mr. Speaker:** I have to point out that the Members' question is very hypothetical. The Minister may want to answer but the Minister is not required to.

**Mr. Kaplan:** Mr. Speaker, is the Minister prepared to recognize that the Budget should be withdrawn because of the leak, irrespective of the reasons for it or whether his theory of ministerial responsibility a theory we do not accept applies to it, and how can he bring to this House a leaked Budget knowing that there can or may have been benefits obtained from it?