

*Adjournment Debate*NATIONAL DEFENCE—REQUEST FOR LIST OF BASES TO BE
CLOSED—EFFECT OF BASE CLOSURES ON SEARCH AND
RESCUE

absolutely. We have seen instances of that, too. Has that happened to us, in Canada? Has power so gone to their heads that the members of the government no longer feel they need to be responsive to popular demand, popular request, and the popular will? Do they resist popular demand, even when it is made known to the government by its own members? We have heard of many on the government side who were kicking over the traces. When the vote came, they were obedient. There is nothing more docile than a maverick properly treated. Can this process be checked? Is there any way of stopping this "slippage"?

There are certain means at our disposal. We seek the truth during the question period. We want to seek the truth by means of an inquiry which could ascertain the facts more easily and objectively than we could, without disrupting the work of this House and country. After all, parliament cannot constitute itself a court of inquiry into matters of this sort. Parliamentarians are involved. Until the proper forum for the inquiry is established, we shall continue doing what we are doing. Why, therefore, can we not have a proper independent inquiry, in the form outlined by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) this afternoon, to determine the facts and to restore the credibility of this House?

I came to this House because it was a credible institution and I hoped to see it work. I now see it being eroded before me. Until such an inquiry is established we all suffer, our representative institutions and the individuals who try to make them work. The fault lies squarely with the Prime Minister.

Mr. J.-J. Blais (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro) has indicated, this matter has been before the House during the question period for the past 12 days. All the matters raised by the hon. member are by no means new. They were raised during the question period. I refer the hon. member to the replies made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and other members of the cabinet.

Parliament is working very well. I challenge quite explicitly any reference or suggestion that the credibility of parliament is at all impaired. I suggest that the credibility of the opposition has been substantially impaired by their attitude and rambling questions on this matter.

I might indicate that parliament has voted on the question of confidence in this government. Contrary to the seven-member majority the hon. member opposite speaks of, if I recall correctly the vote supporting the government in this issue was 128 to 102. Therefore the majority was 26 votes.

I suggest to the hon. member that the attempt by the opposition to try to excite public opinion has fallen flat on its face. I further suggest that he pay more attention to replies that are given, and open his mind as well as his ears, so as to be able to receive the responses made by the Prime Minister and his ministers in good faith in an attempt to reply to questions, although incompetently asked by members of the opposition.

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, talking about credibility, when the parliamentary secretary can explain how it is that the Japanese military can buy 100 Lockheed Orions for \$1.6 billion and we are paying \$1.06 billion for 18, I will understand his lecture to us about credibility. This is the most incredible administration this parliament has seen in the ten or 12 years I have been here.

Just dealing with credibility, I am sorry that the minister has left. It is regrettable that the minister can sit here until ten o'clock and then not bother listening to questions with respect to his department. However, we have the parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Blais: The very able parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Forrestall: He is very able. There is no question about that. I just hope he has permission to give us the right information. The information we are seeking is very simple. It has to do with base closures and consolidations.

I want the parliamentary secretary to respond to several questions. I premise my remarks on the clear understanding from the minister today that he does not in fact have the final report from his departmental people. It has not gone to Cabinet yet, so it is not the final report. If there are any bases to be closed, I will be damned if I want that to be the final report.

How many bases are involved? Where are they located? What are their military functions? How many civilians are involved? What is the extend of the civilian payroll? How many military payrolls will be shuffled around as a consequence of any base consolidation or base closure? What is the present impact of these same civilian and military payrolls on the immediate economic region? What will be the impact after this phase of base closure and consolidation is completed? And this is not the first phase.

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It is an ongoing scenario we have witnessed for ten years under the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the government across the way. I do not know why he does not stand up and say plainly, "We do not need a Canadian military force." That would end the sham he has perpetrated on the Canadian military and on the public to date. Because of the impact of these moves on Canadian workers and their families will the department, before cabinet has completed its consideration of this report, bring into a meaningful role in the decision-making process, UNDE, the union involved? Will it bring municipal officials and municipal authorities involved in this decision into a meaningful role, not merely a consultative role but a role which will reflect concern for the desperate situation which will result if the report results in further base closures?

I want to know, finally, because if the rumours are correct the economic impact on some of these regions will be desperate, what alternatives the government intends to make available to those who are affected. Will they involve the union, will they involve provincial and municipal officials, will they seek out provincial and departmental exp-