

Oral Questions

would be no inflation at all if it were not for increases in taxes and charges by Crown corporations.

The effect, then, of the 4.6 per cent index is to assist Canadians substantially. As you know, Mr. Speaker, it is a policy of the Conservative Party to leave people with their own money because that will stimulate employment better than anything else.

Members should report this significant reduction in tax to their constituents as an indication of the first benefit they are receiving from the Progressive Conservative Government.

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RESEARCH**ANNOUNCED CLOSURE OF FACILITIES AT CHURCHILL, MAN.**

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, it is with grave concern for the future of Canada's potential involvement in space research, and for the subsequent and immediate effect on Churchill, Gimli, and Winnipeg, that I rise today.

In its economic statement the Government announced the closure of the research program in Churchill and Gimli. It has certainly killed the future of ionospheric research in that area, which will create a real danger to future employment in this field. Those scientists who wish to pursue their involvement in this field, now and in the future, will be forced to leave our country.

A further loss of revenue will occur when NASA scientists are forced to withdraw their current and potential use of the Churchill research range.

The cost to dismantle and remove the facility is an additional \$10 million to the Government of Canada. These are the immediate costs and revenue losses to the people of Canada. The cost to our future and our young people is completely unknown, and the Government should reverse its decision.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

ACCESS TO INFORMATION**GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. It appears that the Government has developed an extraordinary obsession for secrecy. In fact it is elevating the phrase "no comment" to an art form. Just listen to the headlines about this keyhole administration. "It is secrecy time". "Paranoia stalks Parliament Hill".

[Translation]

For diplomats, mum will definitely be the word.

[English]

"Tories keep us in the dark"; "The Great Stone Wall"; "Finance Minister refuses to release information on social program cuts".

Why is there this frosty silence? Why has he thrown a cloak of secrecy over his administration?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I regret that my right hon. friend interprets it that way because—

Mr. Gauthier: It is the press.

Mr. Mulroney:—I would like to give him and the House, in response to his entirely legitimate concern, the assurance that that was certainly not my intention nor that of the Government.

I want to indicate that we, as a new Government, came in with much to try to accomplish in a brief period of time. This required some degree of co-ordination.

It was brought to my attention by Mr. John Ferguson, at a press conference that I held last week, that guidelines did exist in the past and the question was whether they applied. I indicated that I would be happy to review them, which I am in the process of doing. Hopefully at a press conference this coming Friday I can impart to the press guidelines that will be reasonable and proper, and which ensure access to the press and availability of information for the Opposition and us all.

There was no intent at any time to curtail the legitimate flow of information. It was an attempt by me to bring a modest degree of order to a new situation. We hope that when I am able to deliver the guidelines that Mr. Ferguson was properly seeking, they will clarify and improve the situation, to the satisfaction of my right hon. friend.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): That is a very seductive answer.

PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in helping the Prime Minister to come to a final decision, I want to remind him of his words in Kingston on August 12 when he said:

If the Canadian people see fit to give us their trust, we will always give them ours. That means an end to the obsession with secrecy. Secrecy in government... is an addiction; the more the Government can have of it, the more it wants of it.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): There may be another addiction at play, the addiction of power. However, I ask the Prime Minister to contrast the actions of his Government to date with those very eloquent words, and will he issue a fiat to his Ministers, including the Deputy Prime Minister, to fulfil that promise which was made in Kingston? Will he lift this