

Oral Questions

The minister has just announced today, I am told, that the Low-Level Air Defence School at CFB Chatham will be moved to Alberta. This is another way of announcing the closure of CFB Chatham.

Can the minister tell the House how he is going to replace 1,000 jobs and the \$20 million annual input that CFB Chatham represents to the economy of the riding of Miramichi?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I realize the hon. member understands the importance of the base because he was a member of the government in 1983 which first started the procedure to close CFB Chatham.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. McKnight: I would inform the hon. member that the replacement activity that the Department of National Defence has identified is that of—

Ms. Copps: Oh.

Mr. McKnight: I am sorry, the member's colleague is interrupting and I will wait.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Miramichi has the floor.

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put my supplementary to the Prime Minister.

During the 1984 election campaign, the Prime Minister promised to the people of Chatham that he would never hurt his home town and that there would be aircraft flying in Chatham as long as there was air.

Will the Prime Minister now rescind this minister's decision and fulfil the promise he made to the people of Chatham?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1450)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the comments attributed to me by my hon. friend are absolutely false.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Mulroney: The statement that I did make was that, if a Conservative government were elected in 1984, we

would put in train a process which would reverse the policy of the Liberal government, of which my hon. friend was a member, which meant the end of CFB Chatham. We said that we would not let the Liberals close Chatham. We would keep it open and we have been doing that ever since.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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[*Translation*]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology claims that the GST is good for Canada as a whole and for Quebec as well. But the Quebec government seems to have repudiated the minister, since they removed the GST on books in Quebec.

My question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology. Will the good Quebecer he claims to be personally put pressure on his colleagues to protect the interests of the people of Quebec and have the GST on books removed in Quebec, as the province of Quebec has already done? Does he prefer to impose ignorance by maintaining the tax on books in Quebec? What do the minister and his colleagues intend to do?

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, this question was answered in part, but I should like to add that the government, recognizing the existence of a francophone market separate from the anglophone market, already announced a seed money program for the cultural industries of Canada, in addition to a program 40 per cent oriented at francophone books. For the first two years, the program will be oriented toward the publishing industry and at least 30 per cent of the yearly budget, or \$9 million, dollars, will be devoted to francophone books in Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology who seems to have lost his tongue. His department has pointed out that the most important element in Canada's future economic growth is knowledge and technology.