

*Oral Questions***INDIAN AFFAIRS**ALLEGED INTERFERENCE IN PLANS FOR USE OF FORMER  
CANADIAN FORCES BASE IN MANITOBA

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister personally investigate the circumstance in which the Department of Indian Affairs has withdrawn its Treasury Board submission that would have transferred land at the Canadian Forces Base Beausejour to the Long Plain Indian Band in the honouring of a major commitment, because of the interference of the Minister of National Health and Welfare in trying to promote a prison in his own riding? Will the Prime Minister personally investigate this matter?

**Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister in question is in Winnipeg today meeting band councils. I will take the question under advisement.

## USE AS PRISON PROPOSED

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, I thought that in light of the Auditor General's Report and the well known experience the Prime Minister has in these matters he might be prepared to undertake a response to this fact. Will the Prime Minister give us a commitment that no additional federal funds will be used for the promotion of this prison unless there is a proper alternative site found for this Indian band in fulfilment of its long-standing commitment?

**Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I have already advised the Hon. Member that the Minister in question is not in the House to answer his question. I will take the question on notice, and we will supply the Hon. Member with an answer in due course.

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**FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

## ESTEY COMMISSION REPORT—MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Finance arising out of his actions and the actions of his colleagues which have cost the Canadian taxpayers close to \$900 million because of their failure to act between March and September of 1985 when the Canadian Commercial Bank and the Northland Bank were going down the drain. Is the Minister aware that in his report Mr. Justice Estey quite clearly related to the fact that he had not been asked to look at the matter of ministerial responsibility and stated: "It may be that other forums and tribunals

having different objectives will reach different conclusions with respect to duties and obligations of the participants in these events"?

Is the Minister saying that, regardless of this disclaimer, Mr. Justice Estey's opinion is the only one that should apply? Will the Minister on his own behalf and on behalf of the Minister of State for Finance accept that they are responsible in the parliamentary system for this loss of \$900 million to the taxpayers?

● (1430)

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, it is a very large report. I am sure the Hon. Member has read the entire report.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** No, no.

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** Probably not. However, it says very clearly that there is nothing in the evidence which leads to criticisms of these Ministers. The Ministers gave the officials adequate guidance and support. I could repeat a number of other elements of what Mr. Justice Estey has said in the report, but surely the Hon. Member must accept that the report speaks for itself.

[Translation]

## MINISTER'S RESPONSIBILITY

**Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I can point this out to the Minister of Finance.

Is he aware of the fact that many times in his summary and in his report, which I have read almost in its entirety since Friday, Mr. Justice Estey is quite critical of the Government and its Ministers? He specifically states that the action they took was altogether inadequate to make sure that they would monitor the program to bail-out the bank which began in March.

Now then, is he prepared to accept the criticisms of Mr. Justice Estey and assume responsibility for the loss of \$900 million, yes or no?

[English]

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is quite clear from what Mr. Justice Estey has said that the Ministers did in fact undertake to be informed about the consequences and state of the portfolio and that we did give direction to the officials involved and supported them in the activities they were undertaking. Mr. Justice Estey says that the information that was provided was inadequate, but we got on top of that information with the work done by Mr. Hitchman and made our decisions accordingly later on in the summer.