

of medicare, or is she trying to persuade him to drop these foolish cutbacks which will be used by provinces like Ontario and Alberta—

**Mrs. Mitchell:** British Columbia.

**Mr. Blaikie:**—as an excuse for the further privatization of medicare?

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member is wrong in his description. Payments from my department to the provinces for medicare will increase yearly on average in the coming five years by 13.4 per cent.

**Mr. Blaikie:** Not as much as they would if you left them alone.

**Miss Bégin:** This is more than the rate of inflation. That is the money calculated according to the three programs which are the elements of the EPF agreements: hospitalization, extended health care, and visits to doctors. This is fully protected. The payments are going to increase annually and the provinces know that. They can decide to punish medicare because they, like us, have to—

**Mr. Blaikie:** You know that is not true.

**Miss Bégin:**—reorder their priorities according to the economic situation. I hope they do not put that on the back of medicare, because our payments for medicare are increasing.

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

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## NATIONAL DEFENCE

COMMITTEE STUDY OF CANADIAN FORCES BASE CHATHAM, N.B.

**Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. Surveillance of Russian Bear aircraft, which have been flying through a portion of the Atlantic coastal Canadian identification zone en route to Cuba in increasing numbers during the past eight months, surely must have vital strategic implications, yet the government has announced the closure of the air base best situated to monitor these intrusions, CFB Chatham in New Brunswick.

Besides the military implications the closure will have, one half of the town's work force will be put out of work. The minister has set up an interdepartmental committee to study alternative uses for the air base—

**Some hon. Members:** Order!

**Madam Speaker:** Order. The questions today have all been exceptionally long.

**Mr. Nielsen:** So have the answers.

## Oral Questions

**Madam Speaker:** We are coming to the end of question period. I wish to recognize as many questioners as possible, and I would really appreciate members shortening their questions.

**Mr. Corbett:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I trust the answers will be short and explicit as well.

The study was to be completed and the report made by the end of January. Will the minister now tell the House what recommendations that committee has made?

**An hon. Member:** Close the base.

**Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence):** Madam Speaker, the answer is yes. I think security on the east coast is adequate, and all measures have been taken to make sure that it is adequate, and we are protecting the Canadian people very well on the east coast.

**An hon. Member:** Provided there is no attack, we are okay.

## MINISTER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

**Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal):** Madam Speaker, I asked for the committee's recommendations and I did not get them, but in view of the fact that over one half of the town's work force is going to become unemployed, and over \$33 million in wages and local purchasing will be lost to the town, will the minister tell the House what recommendations he is going to make to his caucus colleagues about what happens to the town of Chatham and those unemployed? If he cannot be specific, will he assure the people of Chatham that something will be done to ensure that these jobs and revenues will be replaced within a reasonable period of time?

**Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence):** Madam Speaker, I thought the hon. member would have read the most recent speech I made in Chatham stating that we care a lot for the people in this area.

**Mr. Epp:** That is why you are closing the base.

**Mr. Lamontagne:** Well, maybe because of economic and strategic factors we have to phase out that base and try to compensate in the best way we can for the loss of jobs and to the effect on the local economy. However, it is much better to do this than to do what the former minister of national defence said in Chatham last week when he told them that they should stick to their demands that the F-18 be stationed at Chatham, and close Bagotville. That is very good for Quebecers—his suggestion to close Bagotville instead of Chatham.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame, shame!

**Mr. Lamontagne:** Madam Speaker, we have an interdepartmental committee working very hard on the future of Chatham. We have been in communication with the premier of the province, with responsible people in the Miramichi area, and with our Member of Parliament for that area, and everyone is