

## REQUEST FOR POLICY CHANGE

**Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre):** Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet document describes the sad condition of all three services, but in particular the Navy. It points out, as other people have done, that by the end of this decade we will have 12 serviceable ships in the Navy for a country with a coastline 100,000 kilometres long. As the Minister has pointed out in that Cabinet document, the Navy cannot live up to its defence commitments.

I will quote from the public record of what the Minister stated before the Senate. He said:

Currently approved funding levels fall some billions of dollars from the levels that would be necessary over the next 15 years to completely modernize the maritime force at the currently authorized levels.

In other words, this public statement by the Minister confirms what the Minister said in his Cabinet document, namely, that it is a facade to pretend that our maritime forces are living up to NATO commitments.

If the Minister is not going to commit, to use his own words, the billions of dollars the Navy requires, will he at least have the integrity to admit that we shall have to change our defence policies and rely even more on the Americans to protect our coastline because we are incapable of doing it ourselves?

**Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker the hon. gentleman recognizes that last July I signed a contract to obtain six new frigates. The hon. gentleman knows as well that at the same time I announced the TRUMP, the Tribal Class Update Modernization Program. The hon. gentleman knows that those two programs were advanced in recognition that we needed to update our capital equipment in terms of the Maritime Command. There is no great mystery in that, Mr. Speaker. That is all part of the Government's attempt since 1974-75 to increase our investment dramatically in capital equipment.

The hon. gentleman will recall that in 1974-75 the Government spent \$2.5 billion in defence expenditures. At that time the percentage given to capital equipment was roughly 8 per cent. This year I will be spending \$8.7 billion. That is more than a \$6 billion increase in 10 years in defence expenditures, Mr. Speaker. This year I will be spending over 26 per cent, as compared to 8 per cent in 1974-75, on capital equipment. That is a tremendous increase, Mr. Speaker. It is money well spent. We will continue to increase our spending in this area. In 1986-87 I will be spending \$11.1 billion, Mr. Speaker, in order to provide the best equipment for the best Armed Forces there are within NATO.

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

**Mr. Nielsen:** You will not be around.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for York-Peel. Does the Hon. Minister of National Defence rise to be recognized?

**Mr. Blais:** I rise to complete my reply, Mr. Speaker.

## Oral Questions

**Mr. Speaker:** It appeared that the Hon. Minister had given a fairly lengthy reply. The Hon. Member for York Peel.

## RATE OF GROWTH IN DEFENCE EXPENDITURES

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of National Defence. Would the Minister simply assure the House that the Government has indeed approved the maintenance of a 3 per cent annual real growth in expenditures for defence for this fiscal year and for the fiscal years 1986 and 1987?

**Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the hon. gentleman asked me that question. As you will recall, in 1979-80 when the hon. gentleman was President of the Treasury Board he was referred to as "Sinc the Slasher". Those were the days when we did not meet the 3 per cent net increase which the hon. gentleman mentions. In effect there was a net decrease in defence expenditures during the time when that hon. gentleman was responsible for the direct Treasury, Mr. Speaker.

As far as the Government is concerned, we are maintaining our 3 per cent increase. As I advised the Committee on External Affairs and National Defence this week, I have accepted to submit to my colleagues a force goal for NATO of a net increase of 4 per cent in real expenditures for the military.

## REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is also for the Minister of National Defence. I would like him to answer the question that I put. Would he indicate to the House whether the Government has definitively committed to a 3 per cent real growth expenditure increase not only for this fiscal year, but for the fiscal years 1986 and 1987? In short, can he assure the House that the Government has agreed to fund fully its commitment to NATO and our defence commitments generally at a 3 per cent real growth rate for the years to which I have referred?

**Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, I was in Brussels last week.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Yes or no?

**Mr. Blais:** The Member for Parry Sound-Muskoka was with me at the time I made this statement. I indicated that Canada's undertaking to meet the 3 per cent real growth commitment is a real one, and one which I propose to honour.

**Mr. Stevens:** Is it approved?

**Mr. Blais:** I suggest again, Mr. Speaker, that the proof of the Government's performance lies in how we have done in the past. Over the past five years, except for the time when the hon. gentleman was in government, our real rate of increase was 3.5 per cent in terms of defence expenditures.