

Supply

because they know, and this is a basic point to keep in mind, that no conversion is possible without hard and constant co-operative work. In Quebec, we have come quite a long way in this regard.

We have come a long way with this co-operative work because, immediately following the recession of 1981, this approach to economic recovery was taken into consideration by the major players in Quebec, including the labour unions, starting with the CNTU, which just this last year organized a seminar on the subject. Even the Conseil du patronat, which can hardly be suspected of having any sympathy for sovereignty, apparently has easy access to ministers. There is also the current Quebec government; we are not talking here about some obscure future separatist government, but rather about a conventional federalist government ready for commitment, and which is asking the federal government to give its businesses access to available funds for conversion.

The government will have no choice because of the direct relationship that exists. That is precisely what the Official Opposition is attempting to show today, namely that there is a direct connection between the dependency of Quebec businesses on defence industries and the lay-offs now taking place.

I will give you six very real examples which should prompt the government to act much more speedily than it has up until now. I could have given about 50 examples, but I will only mention six, because of the limited time at my disposal.

Between 1990 and 1994, Bendix Avelex, an avionics company which depends on the military market for 70 per cent of its production, laid off 35 employees. As you will see, the more dependent companies are on the military market, the more massive are the lay offs.

Expro, which you will soon hear about in great detail, since the hon. member representing the region concerned will later make a presentation, makes ammunition. That company is also dependent on the military market for 70 per cent of its production and laid off 300 employees.

Héroux, an aeronautics firm, is dependent on the military market for 80 per cent of its production and had to lay off 131 people.

MIL Davie, which is well-known and which we talked about several times in this House, depends on the military market for 91 per cent of its production and laid off 2,740 employees—yes, Mr. Speaker, 2,740. This is unacceptable! It is a shame and a social disaster!

Oerlikon, which is well known, builds ground-based and missile systems. It is 100 per cent dependent on the military and had to let go 410 employees. As for Paramax, it is 100 per cent dependent and it laid off 1,000 people.

I do not know if the Minister of Industry is as shaken as I am, but I can hear him. I share his feeling of helplessness and I offer him my co-operation and that of the Official Opposition. We are telling this government that action is urgently needed. Stop procrastinating and let us work together; we, the Official Opposition, are willing to co-operate.

In the past, government members have said that we were only concerned by issues affecting Quebec, that we did not have a national vision and that we did not truly assumed our role. Now, this is an issue which concerns all regions of Canada, and particularly Quebec. And what we are saying is that, if the government is really serious about this, it should recognize that it does have that instrument, which, if improved, could help us to truly support businesses that really want to proceed with a conversion process. And let me remind those who are listening to this debate that this instrument is the Defence Industry Production Program or DIPP. We will see how serious the government is, since important budgets are involved in this program; we are speaking of \$225 million.

For the program to be efficient, this budget must take into account local factors as well as local stakeholders, the main people concerned, who must work together and cooperate to achieve conversion.

You indicate to me that my time is up, Mr. Speaker. I simply want to tell the government that we want nothing more than to co-operate on this issue because we truly and honestly believe that time is of the essence.

• (1040)

[English]

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, I begin by saying through you to the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve that we welcome this debate today and we welcome the spirit and tone that he has put forward in his remarks. We too are going to be constructive and specific in responding.

By the way, I do share the hon. member's view that his riding in Montreal is one of the most beautiful parts of our country. One day when he comes to Toronto he will share the view that I have of my city.

The conversion of military technology to peacetime use is something to which we in this government are committed. The member cited many examples of how people through layoffs, et cetera, were in a disastrous state, unemployed, highly skilled people. We are aware of that. We are moving.

We have to expand our thinking and maybe look at new types of instruments to help in this conversion. I want to give a specific example. Amortek is a company in Stratford, Ontario, that made military fire trucks. About a year and a half ago the need for military fire trucks was really not there. It converted to