

Supply

but we sense that there is a malaise in this industry regarding the government's actions, or lack of action.

We have to be aware of the dangers which would threaten our economy should inertia, a lack of planning, or a lack of vision guide the government's actions and policies.

There is a precedent in Canada. A very high-tech industry of the time—I am referring to the AVRO ARROW case in the fifties—had to cease operations, which resulted in thousands of Canadian engineers leaving the country to go to the United States, thus triggering a massive exodus of brain drain.

If the government fails to take any action, the same will happen to the Canadian economy which, in a matter of a few years, may lose a very substantial number of qualified people who might otherwise have stayed here to try to turn the situation around.

Furthermore, while in Canada there seems to be a conspiracy of silence in this respect, in the United States the Clinton administration plans to provide \$20 billion in assistance over the next five years for defence conversion. Here in Canada, \$150 million will be spent over the next few years on defence research, and this \$150 million will decrease by \$10 million annually, starting in 1996–97. There is a difference in vision between the two administrations which is enormous.

What is particularly exasperating, and shocking as well, is that there are plenty of projects that could be converted. The Bloc Québécois was very clear about that during the debate on cancelling the helicopter contract. It is not just cancelling the contract but knowing how we can make the best of the situation and convert a project that was rather questionable, from the military point of view, to civilian production that will benefit the population and ensure that the know-how will stay, in Quebec in this case, and that it will be used for civilian purposes and that the budgets will be maintained.

At the time we said that after cancelling the helicopter contract, the government should proceed with construction of the high-speed train. The manufacturing process would require equally complex technology which would have made it possible for our researchers and scientists to stay here and continue to develop and do research, but this time for civilian industries. If the government were to go ahead with this project, it would be able to develop new expertise in a field with a very promising future, apparently, in North America, and Quebec and Canada would be able to capture a substantial part of the market so that the principal expertise in North America would be spread from Quebec City to Windsor, via Trois-Rivières. However, the project is on the back burner, and the government does not really know where it is headed in this respect. Once again, the government lacks vision. There is also the sad case which we

will not forget, despite the government's apathy, namely the case of MIL Davie of Lauzon. This company, which built military vessels primarily for the Canadian government, is facing a situation where it will no longer receive any contracts because of the government's decision to pull out of this field. The company has come up with its own conversion plan depending on the good will of the current government which could, if it wanted to, award the contract to build the Magdalen Island ferry to this shipyard.

• (1310)

We learned again yesterday that the government does not know where it stands. It still does not know whether it will order a new ferry to be built or whether it will purchase one from a foreign shipyard. If the political will existed, the contract would have been awarded to MIL Davie a long time ago, since it has a conversion plan in place and has the facilities to build the ferry. If the government were to proceed on this, it would be killing two birds with one stone, that is it would be keeping our domestic know-how here in Canada and would be conducting research and development and converting former military facilities for civilian purposes.

In conclusion, I have to wonder where all of this is leading. Clearly, this government is guilty of lacking vision and empathy for the situation experienced by hundreds of thousands of Canadians and Quebecers. This government does not know in which direction it is heading. It lacks not only vision, but also the political courage to address the real problems facing people.

The red book is nothing more than smoke and mirrors. Personally, I am deeply disappointed and concerned because these are old methods which today have led to public cynicism. People realize that during election campaigns, candidates say just about anything. Once in office, however, they continue to provide the same kind of government and style of administration they once criticized. Nothing changes. This type of cynicism is encouraged and this contradicts the nice statements made in the red book.

How is it that today's Liberals and yesterday's Tories seem to have so much in common? I will conclude on this note, Mr. Speaker, perhaps because there is a common denominator. Both parties are financed by the same persons. They both feed from the same trough and both produce the same results.

[English]

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member speaks about Quebec youth and their vulnerability to federal Liberal programs.

I would have to differ. I have great respect for the Quebec youth. I believe the young people of Quebec are just as intelligent, if not more so, than the rest of our young people in Canada.