

The company is now busy expanding its facilities in order to welcome clients from around the world who will attend courses focusing on some of the most advanced technologies in the world, from aircrafts to ships. Several years ago, CAE Electronics acquired a major U.S. competitor called Link. This company is now truly world class with a diverse client base. Nevertheless, it continues to manage the electronics side of the business from its offices in Montreal.

However, CAE Electronics still needs the support of the government. This is especially true in the case of the project which it is carrying out with the American National Aerospace Administration and which involves exploring the application of virtual reality in the cockpit. Without the support of the Defence Industry Productivity Program, projects like this which are vitally important to the future of CAE Electronics would be impossible to carry out.

• (1640)

That is why the federal government has indicated in the red book it was determined to maintain this important program. CAE also takes an active part in other defence conversion projects, some of which in sectors far removed from traditional defence activities. It is currently involved in a marketing project for an artificial heart designed at the Heart Institute in Ottawa.

However, CAE still considers defence as an important part of the corporate strategy in its business plans. Defence contracts do account for the best part of its commercial activity and offer unique opportunities to explore the limits of technology applied to training and simulation.

The federal government plans on continuing its partnership with CAE as well as with a number of other innovative, creative and flourishing companies. The Canadian taxpayers' investments in companies such as this one have never been more important. CAE and the Montreal area can expect to prosper thanks to these investments. CAE has undertaken to design, develop and market new products and new services to meet the needs of the population in the 21st century.

There are many more success stories in the defence industry, stories of companies that have expanded their lines of activity and prospered by identifying a need and meeting it commercially.

Defence conversion is nothing new for many Canadian companies, and their success is envied by their competitors.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The hon. member for Manicouagan, Labour Relations; the hon.

Supply

member for Rosedale, Rwanda; the hon. member for Laurentides, Anti-flu Vaccines; the hon. member for Lévis, the Olympic Games of 2002.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford): Madam Speaker, it is always for me an honour, a pleasure and a privilege to speak in this House on behalf of the people of Shefford who elected me.

As you know, Madam Speaker, my region of Granby has been hit hard by the unemployment problem plaguing the country. In this speech, I want to express my support for the defence industry conversion program. I strongly support the motion of my colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, which condemns the government for its inaction in this vital sector with the potential to create high-tech jobs.

How can the government sit on its hands on such an important issue after making firm commitments in this regard in the last election campaign? As you know and since they talk about it all the time, these commitments can be found in the Liberal Party's red book and in a March 26, 1993 press release.

What is now left of these moral commitments? To impress upon the government the meaning of the words "active", "alert" and "enterprising", I will quote the motion of my colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve:

That this House condemn the government for its unacceptable delays in developing and implementing a genuine strategy for the conversion of defence industries to civilian production, which would save and create new jobs in high-technology sectors.

• (1645)

I think this motion clearly expresses the goal we want to achieve, namely to convert defence industries to civilian production and create high-tech jobs. In the light of this information, I remind the government that it must honour its commitments and quickly develop a genuine strategy for the conversion of defence industries.

The main reason underlying my position is that, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war, spending on defence industries is no longer based on the initial strategic foundation. Thus, as a member of the Joint Committee on Defence, I still maintain that the amount spent on military defence is quite high and we need a moratorium to stop the waste of public funds. However, in making cuts in military spending, we must act fairly to the provinces and the various components of the defence industry.

Although the EH-101 helicopter project promised economic benefits for Quebec, we in the Bloc Québécois were opposed to this program, but we insisted on the need to ensure economic and industrial benefits for Quebec through a project like the high-speed train, and these benefits are not yet forthcoming.