

Adjournment Debate

Mr. LeBlanc (Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso): Madam Speaker, first of all, I wish to thank the hon. member opposite for his question and also for his participation in the Human Resources Development Committee, where he made a very useful contribution on behalf of his party. But in responding to some points that he has raised, I said that Quebec had been considerably spared by the defence cuts in the budget. I say this because it is true and because other parts of Canada have suffered much deeper cuts in terms of funds, dollars and jobs.

If we had followed his party's guidelines, the cuts would have been much deeper in Quebec and elsewhere. But I think that what the hon. member must remember is that, for example, on the MIL Davie issue, I am not an expert on that, but from what I understand, it is under discussion by both levels of government. There is a plan and both governments are discussing it, and that is what they have to do in a country such as ours. And that is what we need in order to find solutions to our problems. With that, I think the hon. member should, as he has been doing on the committee, and his party also should participate constructively in solutions that we must all bring to the problems, not only in Quebec, but in other areas of this country as well.

[English]

Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member this. The motion relates to the unacceptable delays in converting the national defence industry to civilian production, but minimum reference was made to that actual approach in his presentation.

I would like him to expand on that theme a little bit, if indeed there is a program along this line and if there is some delay in this that could possibly be speeded up.

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question. To my knowledge the process of defence conversion is well under way, as has been mentioned by previous speakers. The government is assisting this process.

I did not feel the need to go into a great deal of detail since those points have already been made by those closer to the issue than myself.

• (1725)

We are well aware that parallel to a restructuring in the defence sector, which is proceeding and which will be informed by the debate and by the review on defence policy now taking place, as well as other initiatives which the government is taking to promote the high technology and information sectors of our economy, that we will assist and support the conversion of industries currently developed to focus mainly on military production, into other activities.

It is not something that takes place overnight. It is a process in which the government is assisting. We are not following the Reform Party's approach which would have been, as I under-

stood it, not to cut defence and not to support conversion, which I find rather contradictory certainly in the light of the changes that are taking place not only in Canada but around the world in this very important sector of our economy.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Seeing no further members rising—

[Translation]

Since the debate is over, under Section 81(19) of the Standing Orders, the proceedings on the motion before the House are terminated.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): We will suspend temporarily to the call of the Chair when we will take the proceedings on the adjournment motion.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 5.25 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 5.32 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

LABOUR RELATIONS

Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan): Madam Speaker, my question would probably be for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Development of Human resources.

Since February 20, 400 employees of the QNS & L of Sept-Îles in my riding of Manicouagan are locked out. Federal law does not forbid the employer, the IOC mining company, to hire scabs, which naturally makes the situation extremely tense and even ready to explode.

Since nothing hinders its activities, the company refuses to negotiate with its employees even if they want to work.

• (1735)

I would like to ask the Liberal government if they agree that the absence of a federal anti-scab law is the reason for the deterioration of negotiations between QNS & L and local 9344 of the steel workers' union. I would also ask the government if they intend to intervene in that labour dispute and thus help the workers?

[English]

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to respond on behalf of the government to the hon. member's question and I