

As my remarks show, Quebec industries in the area of aerospace and defence materiel are different in several regards from similar industries in other countries. I realize that several aerospace and defence materiel industries are facing an uncertain future in the years to come. Nevertheless I have reasons to believe that because of their achievements, the aerospace and defense materiel industries in Quebec are able and willing to meet that challenge.

• (1310)

I hope I have clearly explained today the significance of recognizing the unique character of Quebec industries in the aerospace and defense materiel area. By building upon their relative force compared to the majority of the industries in the rest of the world, Quebec industries are well on the way to the diversification of their production and the conversion of their technology.

As was announced recently in the budget, the federal government intends to change the Defence Industry Productivity Program in order to support the changes that the Quebec industry of aerospace and defense materiel is carrying out. I am confident that support from the federal and provincial governments for Quebec's aerospace and defence industry will help create the proper environment for the changes to continue.

As I said before, given the very unique situation existing in Quebec, it is probably not appropriate to think about implementing solutions adopted in Europe and the United States. We all recognize that production diversification in the defence equipment industry presents many challenges. As we said earlier today, the task is not an easy one and there are no miracle cures. But it certainly does not mean problems are unsolvable. There is a solution and there will always be one.

Some major efforts are being made in the private sector in Quebec and they benefit the aerospace and defence equipment industry. The government will continue to fully support those efforts to make sure this industry can continue to face the challenges and seize the opportunities which will arise in Quebec, in Canada and all over the world.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I would like to know if the Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General still intends to share his time with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport.

**Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine):** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Very well. There will be a five minute period for questions and comments to the member who just spoke.

**Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech of my colleague, a member from Quebec.

### Supply

I think he drew a good picture of the situation. He presented the facts globally, discussing the problem that could ensue.

I have a question for him. Is it not the role of a responsible government to stimulate, encourage and assist the implementation of policies that could facilitate the conversion of defence industries? In this perspective, as a member of his caucus, is he committed to promoting such action so that ultimately, in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada, we really get a conversion policy that will allow regions to survive?

As you know, 11,000 jobs have been lost in Quebec since 1988. It is most important for us that the government, of which my colleague is a member, come up with solutions. It is about time they stop telling the House they are aware of the problem, that they know all about it. Everybody knows the problem but we are waiting for the government to take a firm stand. We expect this government that was elected to govern to present us with policies that would bring about a fast recovery in this sector and the conversion of the defence industry. I would like to hear his comments in this regard.

**Mr. Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine):** Mr. Speaker, this government has presented its job creation program in its Budget and, these last few weeks, through the Minister of Human Resources Development. New technologies are the order of the day, of course. The government would like Canadians and Quebecers to get more involved in sciences.

I believe that diversification is in the cards for the near future. We know all about the defence industry, or rather its sorry state brought about by the end of the cold war. Since 1989-90, we have been living in a new world, a different world, and I believe that the government is committed to bringing about a greater diversification of Canadian industries to increase our competitiveness. I think that what we have achieved in the past six months—we have been in office six months already—for instance, the infrastructure program, the job creation program, the youth programs, the budget cuts, shows a certain maturity and exemplary fiscal responsibility. I believe that we are going to stay the course with regard not only to the military sector, but also to the Canadian industrial sector as a whole.

• (1315)

[English]

**Mr. Joe Fontana (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to speak on this topic which is so important to a large number of Canadians.

I thank the hon. member opposite for focusing attention on the future of the defence industry. It is an industry which over the years has provided much employment across Canada and will do so in the future.