

The Budget

country that contribute components. Do they want us to cancel that? I think not.

I said to some colleagues on the east coast: "Did you want us to cancel the coastal patrol vessel with nearly a billion dollar contract that will keep the Halifax shipyards working for the next few years?" This is work that can be built upon by other contractors and value added for the future. No.

[Translation]

I ask members of the Bloc Québécois, the Official Opposition: Do they want that contract for the construction of a new supply depot in Montreal to be carried out?

[English]

We are going to build a state of the art supply centre in Montreal, in consitutencies represented by the Bloc Québécois. We are not playing politics. We are thinking about the best interest of people in Quebec in this case.

Are they saying they want the 25 per cent reductions they bandied about to be taken out in this way, by cancelling a \$270 million computer contract, much of which will be spent in the province of Quebec? Did they not want us to consolidate the supply mechanism in Edmonton and in Montreal? I would like answers to those questions.

While I am on the subject of the Official Opposition, I read a quote from question period that I liked so much I will read it again. Before doing so I will read a quote from yesterday's debate.

[Translation]

I quote the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, who just ended his speech and who said this in his reply to the budget speech yesterday in the House: "I have the feeling that this government is living on another planet, that it is not aware of Canada's excessive debt, which puts it in first place about everywhere in terms of poor performance".

[English]

They say we are living on another planet and ask whether we know about the debt. Then they sit here this afternoon and criticize us for the cuts that were made to the province of Quebec.

My friend over there, the critic, is a nice guy but this is what he said in the House of Commons on February 17.

[Translation]

I quote the hon. member for Charlesbourg: "In spite of it all, the defence infrastructure remains far too big for the size of the forces. With a strength of merely 78,000 members, the Canadian Armed Forces are maintaining from coast to coast facilities that could accommodate 140,000. Obviously, more cuts are needed,

especially since several of our bases"—several of our bases, Madam Speaker—"are obsolete and increasingly expensive to maintain".

But not in Quebec. Oh no! Not in Quebec! Make cuts, but not in Quebec! That is what the Bloc Québécois member is saying.

I continue to quote, Madam Speaker: "Also, their strategic value is not the same as it was at the time they were built. So, for all these reasons, the government will have to make a choice and impose a new round of closures". I just quoted the Official Opposition critic for National Defence and Foreign Affairs.

I will now quote the hon. member for Verchères, who said this during the same debate, on February 17: "During the last election, and many times since October 25, the Bloc Québécois has reaffirmed its support for cuts in the budget of the Department of National Defence. Despite the international context I have just described, we believe that we could cut that budget by some 25 per cent without dramatically impairing the operations of that important department". That is what he said in the House, Madam Speaker.

• (1725)

If we cut the defence budget, as we did yesterday, there will be a decrease in the number of soldiers and officers in the army and other Canadian forces. That is why we do not need three military colleges. I want the hon. members over there to be honest and to acknowledge that we are not closing only the Collège militaire de Saint-Jean, in Quebec, but also the Royal Roads, in British Columbia. We are trying to be fair to the people in Quebec and to all Canadians.

An hon. member: How sad!

Mr. Collenette: We made cuts, yes, and it is sad. Ten years ago, when I was a member of this House, I went to the Collège militaire de Saint-Jean to study French, and I am sad at the idea of closing this college. As I said during Question Period, there will be a military college in Kingston, a national military college for all Canadians, where everything will be done in both official languages. I see the hon. member does not believe me.

[English]

These people over there say one thing every night on the news in Quebec; I watch the news from Quebec. They say one thing there and another thing here. They do not believe in the same concept of Canada we believe in.

The hon. member for Charlesbourg stood in the House and said, as have some of his colleagues, that there cannot be a bilingual college because it is not in Quebec. What about the million francophones who live outside Quebec? What about them? I do not get upset very often, but I get upset when I hear that kind of rhetoric. That kind of rhetoric tries to tear the country apart and we are not going to have any part of it.