

Government Orders

clear weaponry. I support the continued testing of the cruise missile and the guidance system thereof.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf): Madam Speaker, I particularly appreciated the speech by the member for Athabasca. Several points he raised are also concerns of mine. I am all the more happy as the member for Mississauga West, who spoke before him, mentioned that she would rather see the world disarm than go on with the testing.

I would like to share a thought with the member for Athabasca and ask his comment on the matter. Let us compare the present situation to a car with a safety belt. I know I am a cautious driver but I know as well that other cars could skid and bang into mine. That is why, even though I am a careful driver, I buckle up and I am awfully happy to know that this device underwent the appropriate testing.

This is my question to the member for Athabasca: Would he agree that, in the present context, this testing is giving us a better guaranty of safety, even if we know that we will never live in a perfect world?

[*English*]

Mr. Chatters: Madam Speaker, I very much agree with the hon. member that in a perfect world there would be no need for armed forces and there would be no need for weaponry. Unfortunately, we are in a far from perfect world and as long as there are greedy people in this world with aspirations to conquer other countries and take over territories we will always need a means of defending ourselves. I support the testing on this basis.

• (1800)

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River): Madam Speaker, as this is my first speech in this House, I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate the Speaker on his election and as well, to you, Madam Speaker, on your appointment.

I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate all members who have just been elected to this 35th Parliament of Canada. It is a historic time for all of us and a new era. I am certainly looking forward to the opportunity to participate with some humility.

I certainly want to thank the constituents of the Peace River riding for their confidence in me and also my family who has given me a great deal of support in the two years it has taken to achieve the goal of becoming a member of Parliament. I would also like to thank a number of friends in the riding.

I would just like to relate the story of when I was home at Christmas. Somebody asked me how I was making out and I said I was starting to feel a little bit more comfortable in the House.

However, they reminded me that I should not really get to feel too comfortable here. I think that is a good piece of advice.

I just want to tell the House a little bit about the Peace River riding. My colleague from Athabasca has told us about his riding. We share a boundary. Together we represent sort of the northern half of Alberta. It is an extremely big riding, one of the largest ridings in Canada. The border on the west is the British Columbia border and on the north the Northwest Territories.

Just a little bit of history about the Peace River riding: Some 200 years ago there were two warring Indian tribes. They had gathered on the banks of the Peace River, a river that was not named at that point, for peace negotiations and therefore the name came about as the Peace River.

It was an area that was a main artery to opening up western Canada. Alexander Mackenzie used that route to the Pacific Ocean in 1793, some 200 years ago.

The area in general was settled in the early 1900s by immigrants from Europe, the United States, as well as people from eastern Canada developing a new territory. They were looking for new opportunities.

Mr. McGuire: All maritimers out there.

Mr. Penson: Some from the Ottawa area I believe as well.

They were very innovative people. As a result of living in the northern climates they have had to be. Agriculture is probably the main industry, oil and gas is the second and forestry is very important to the riding as well.

The city of Grand Prairie is the biggest centre in the riding. It is a city of some 30,000 people.

The discussion today is very pertinent to my riding in that the cruise missile test does take place over a major corridor within the riding. Although, as somebody said earlier, the northern area is sparsely populated this is the most populated area along the cruise missile test route.

I also want to say that this area is very similar to the area that the Americans were looking at in their test. It has a similar climate to that of Russia, particularly Moscow. We are on the same latitude.

I just want to remind hon. members that I read the other day that Canada has the coldest capital of anywhere in the world so although I live in northern Alberta and we have a climate similar to Moscow that still makes it warmer than the climate here in Ottawa.

The terrain is very similar as well.

I would just like to say that the major debate over the cruise missile testing really took place 10 years ago. I really think to some degree this is a bit redundant today. The matter was raised and discussed to a great degree in 1983 before the testing took place and I do not think things have changed significantly since that time. As a matter of fact when the treaty was renewed in