

Abandonment of Defence Projects

annihilation. This glimpse of our country's future is hardly an enviable prospect.

An hon. Member: Do not make us cry.

Mr. Caouette: You are going to cry all right at the next election, do not worry.

Mr. Gregoire: Mr. Speaker, without getting sentimental, but to come back to hard facts, I think that all hon. members of the province of Quebec—and I appeal to them now—should make it their duty vigorously to protest against the acquisition, by this country, of nuclear arms or the stocking of such nuclear arms on the territory of the state of Quebec, by voting with courage and determination in favour of the subamendment we introduced.

If they do so, they will deserve the respect and consideration of their fellow citizens. On the other hand, if they abstain from doing so, they will be blamed for their action all their lives.

Let them learn to stand up. Serpents love to crawl on their bellies, but the proper attitude of man is to stand erect. It is, indeed, a happy feeling to stand up, but some men go on crawling like poisonous snakes.

[Text]

Mr. Lawrence E. Kindt (MacLeod): Mr. Speaker, I wish to say a few words at this time with respect to the Penhold airport. It was said during yesterday afternoon's debate that this R.C.A.F. station is being seriously considered for closure by the Minister of National Defence. However, many things remain to be said, and I wish to put on the record some of the economic factors which, as a perusal of the record will show, will be consequent upon such closure.

The Penhold airport is a well developed base which cost in the neighbourhood of \$40 million to \$50 million. If any hon. member has seen the base he will bear me out when I say that the living accommodation there is second to none; the dwellings constitute the finest in living quarters. All of this cost a tremendous amount of money, in addition to the provision of runways, hangars, and all the other facilities necessary to an airport.

If this Penhold airport were to be scrapped, what would be the scrap value? Having had some three years of experience with airports which were sold through Crown Assets Disposal Corporation, I can tell the minister that the scrap value of Penhold once it has been closed would be not more than 10 cents on the dollar. If three years pass and the paint starts to peel and other things go wrong, the scrap value will be about 5 cents on the dollar. That was the experience at Fort Macleod airport, at the Vulcan airport, and

[Mr. Gregoire.]

also at the Claresholm airport. All these airports had splendid locations, with wonderful runways which could be lengthened to accommodate jet flying without trouble because the airports are located in areas where the ground is as level as a billiard table.

If freedom of airways and safety are factors, Mr. Speaker, why not take a good look at Claresholm or Fort Macleod as a jet base? If it is a question of saving money and greater safety, why not take a look at either of those two airports? However, I am of the opinion that it was neither a question of safety nor, in the strictest sense, a financial consideration; it was other considerations which led the minister to make his decision regarding Penhold, and I intend to go into some of them.

Mr. Marcoux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, it seems to me that the hon. member's speech is completely irrelevant to the subamendment which is now before the house. I suggest that he direct his remarks to the subamendment.

Mr. Kindt: Perhaps my hon. friend's intervention is completely irrelevant too. Adjacent to Penhold is the city of Red Deer. That city has become adjusted to a \$4 million pay roll. Over 700 service personnel are located at Penhold and there are 250 civilians. The Department of National Defence has encouraged the Vista village community, which consists of 60 large units many of which are now occupied by R.C.A.F. officers. The Department of National Defence has guaranteed a ten year occupation term to the builder. Why was it not known ahead of time that the government was going to close the base, before all this additional equipment was provided?

Fifteen miles east of the airport and connected to it by a new government built road is a multi-million dollar radar station which is tied in with R.C.A.F. activities. Adjacent to the airport are two other huge defence installations, an underground shelter for heads of government in case of attack and a communications centre which would take care of the province's communications work also in the case of attack. If that station were closed it would mean a loss of \$4 million to the area. It would mean about \$1 million loss in housing construction, and it would mean hundreds of thousands of dollars lost through repairs and maintenance. Above all, the building trade of the area would be dealt a mortal blow. The excess of housing would be apparent to anyone, and the future of the building trade in the area is likely to feel the effects for many years to come.