

Ms. Copps: Yes. Absolutely.

[English]

Mr. Gray: Anyway, tomorrow the House will resume consideration of Bill C-22 respecting Pearson airport. If this is completed at second reading, we will turn to Bill C-25 to amend the Canada Petroleum Resources Act. If there is time, we will have Bill C-26 regarding the National Library.

Monday the House will resume business where it left off on Friday. When this is completed, we will proceed to Bill C-27, the income tax technical bill. On Tuesday, the House will consider the motion in the name of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food in order to debate matters of importance to Canadian farmers.

I understand that discussions are going on aimed at having the House sit into the evening to accommodate all those who wish to participate in this important debate.

In any event, the House will resume business from where it left off on Monday and Thursday will be an allotted day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1505)

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—CONVERSION OF DEFENCE INDUSTRIES

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mrs. Georgette Sheridan (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Madam Speaker, one key objective of the government in introducing these programs is to maintain knowledge in intensive industries and the high technology employment which is part of it. This, of course, is also an objective of our efforts to assist in the conversion of the Quebec defence industry.

While many of the approaches which I have just outlined would be applicable to the Quebec defence industry, I believe it would be a mistake to try to impose, for example, a U.S. style solution to the Quebec situation.

[Translation]

A number of quite marked differences exist in terms of defence industry conversion between Quebec and the United States and even other parts of the world, like Europe.

Supply

Basically, the Quebec defence industry conversion is unique and different from any other. A fair number of defence industries in Quebec would be more appropriately referred to as aerospace and defence industries. I say this because, unlike many of its international competitors, the Quebec defence industry has already diversified its production considerably. It is producing a wide range of commercial and defence products.

[English]

Quebec's industry is unique in another important respect, one in which we should all take pride. Quebec's aerospace and defence sector sells a large proportion of its products and services in world markets. To do this successfully it must, and in fact do, produce world class products at competitive prices.

Like the rest of the Canadian aerospace and defence industry, Quebec firms focus on high technology market niches. They export subsystems and components sold primarily to aerospace and defence prime contractors in countries around the world.

This is a remarkable achievement. A country as small as Canada ranks sixth in the world in total aerospace and defence sales, with between 70 and 80 per cent of all production exported to other countries.

We should be proud of these companies and of the workers in these dynamic industries who make this significant contribution to the economies of Quebec and Canada.

As my comments indicate, Quebec's aerospace and defence industries are in many ways different from their counterparts in other areas of the world. I realize that many aerospace and defence firms face uncertain prospects in the years that lie ahead. But I am also confident that based on their past track record Quebec's aerospace and defence industries can and will rise to this challenge.

[Translation]

I hope I have demonstrated today the importance of recognizing how unique the Quebec aerospace and defence industries are. By building on their relative strength in relation with the majority of industries in the rest of the world, Quebec industries are well on the way to diversifying their production and converting their technologies.

As mentioned recently in the budget, the federal government intends to change the Defence Industry Productivity Program (DIPP) in support of changes in the Quebec aerospace and defence industry. I have good hope that all the support provided by both the federal and the provincial governments to the Quebec aerospace and defence industry will foster conditions favourable to the pursuit of changes.

As I said earlier, given the unique circumstances of Quebec, it may not be appropriate to consider applying in that case