

Supply

And I remember in the 1980s seeing follow-up analyses saying that, according to the experts, the promises were never kept. Either I misunderstood the member from the Reform Party or he does not know—that is his right—but I hope we will no longer hear such remarks, as though Quebecers' concerns were whims, to use once again the words of the hon. member for Saint-Maurice.

I would like to suggest to my dear colleague from Nanaimo—Cowichan, who is responsible for recruiting Reform Party members in Quebec, that such comments will not help him in his task.

Mr. Ringma: Mr. Speaker, I obviously did not express myself clearly in English because the hon. member misunderstood me or he does not understand the F-18 situation.

First of all, there were no promises to build the F-18 in Quebec; it was to be built in the United States but a few parts would be built here in Canada. The contract I mentioned was only for the maintenance of this plane and it was awarded to Winnipeg-based Bristol Aerospace, which had it in the bag but, as the hon. member said, the government decided that it should still give Quebec something even if it lost votes in the West or upset Westerners. It did not matter; they had to give it to Quebec.

The contract was awarded for political reasons, and that must stop in Canada.

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, first I want to tell the hon. member that indeed, and Quebecers are aware of it, there are frustrations in Western Canada, where people may have the impression that Quebec gets more than its fair share. However, I want to remind the hon. member that, among large provinces, both in terms of population and size, Quebec is undoubtedly the province with the highest unemployment rate and the largest number of poor in cities. It is a state, or at least a province, where there are numerous problems. And I personally do not think that Quebec is asking for more than its fair share, far from it.

• (1145)

I want to point out to the hon. member one thing which was overlooked. If we proposed to discuss today the conversion of defence industries, and if Bloc Quebecois members talk more specifically about Quebec, it is because a consensus already exists in our province between the City of Montreal, the Quebec Liberal government, the unions and the Conseil du patronat.

Mr. Speaker, the situation in Quebec is such that we must absolutely find a way to ensure the conversion of this industry. As my colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonnette mentioned earlier, out of 57,000 jobs, 11,000 have disappeared since 1988.

The situation is disastrous and even catastrophic. The Reform Party member did not say that we are in times of war, but he seemed to imply that there are conflicts everywhere. We must be serious and believe that it is possible to have peace. I think it is reasonable to say that we are less in danger than we were 20 years ago, and that the need for arms is also less than it was 20 years ago.

I find it somewhat unfortunate to think that we must continue to arm ourselves. In conclusion, I want to tell the hon. member that there are frustrations in the West. However, the Bloc Quebecois is well aware of those frustrations and we have a plan for the future of Canada which will eliminate those frustrations once and for all. Our plan will ultimately put an end to the constant bickering between us by creating parallel systems, in harmony. This is what Quebecers hope.

[*English*]

Mr. Ringma: Mr. Speaker, I would agree with my hon. colleague that indeed we want to work side by side in peace not just with Quebec and all of Canada but elsewhere in the world.

Absolutely there is no one who likes peace more than a professional military person. Having put in my 35 years, having seen the terrible results of war, I could not agree more. Let us go for peace.

Having said that, I look around the world. I look at the two Koreas. I look at the situation in Vietnam and Cambodia. I look at Sri Lanka, the Tamils vis-à-vis the rest of India. I look at the Kashmir situation, Afghanistan, on and on. You cannot look at any part of the globe and say there is peace around the world because peace is not there. Therefore the assurance of peace is certainly being threatened. Anyway, that is getting far too much into philosophy.

[*Translation*]

We are aware of the unemployment problem in Quebec, but I wonder why the problem is more acute in that province. I believe Quebec has all the necessary tools: intelligent people, hard workers, industries, the river, transportation, everything.

So, if unemployment is more severe in that province, I wonder if it is not partly a matter of policy.

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières): Mr. Speaker, as industry critic for the opposition, I am very pleased to take part in this debate on a motion put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonnette, for which I want to congratulate him. His motion concerning industrial conversion reads as follows:

That this House condemn the government for its unacceptable delays in developing and implementing a genuine strategy for the conversion of defence industries to civilian production, which would save and create new jobs in high-technology sectors.

• (1150)

This motion shows how concerned we, in the opposition and in the Bloc Quebecois, are about this whole issue of industrial conversion, given the current situation.