

Government Orders

massive deficits. It is the arms race that has caused the scarcity of capital and high interest rates.

When we saw the possibility of an end to the arms race and the cold war, there were many of us who had high hopes for the so-called peace dividend. Finally nations could start redirecting their resources, not just their capital, but their scientists, their technology and their manufacturing capacities toward peaceful and human needs rather than the death industry and the production of goods and services meant to kill people.

We have been disappointed because I am afraid that the peace dividend is still very illusory. It is certainly not there. Perhaps we should not have been so naive. We should have realized that the arms merchants have done very well in the past in their industry and they were not going to give up that easily. They are still very active today. Certainly for them the war with Iraq was a tremendous blessing. They are hoping to regenerate an arms race, maybe a little different. Maybe they can convince the Russians and the Chinese that with the sophistication of the American weaponry, they had better start spending some more. If they start spending more, perhaps other countries will spend more. Perhaps we can pick up the arms race again and then the merchants of death will be quite happy and the whole peace dividend will start, like a mirage, to disappear.

What a tragedy that would be. What a sin that would be to all humanity. Surely we hope for the end of the arms race and that these massive human and physical natural resources can be focused on the meeting of human needs on a global scale, from the homeless in Canada and the people who stand in line at the food banks all the way around the globe to the starvation and the human suffering that occurs in many lands.

As human beings we have the resources. Never in the history of the human race have we been able as human beings to develop the capacity to meet the needs of every man, woman and child on the face of this planet. It has been the arms race that has allowed us to continue and that has forced us to live in a world of scarcity when really we should be living in a world of plenty.

In conclusion, I would like to put on the record the famous quote from former President Dwight D. Eisenhower:

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final scene a theft from those who hunger, and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its labourers, the genius of its scientists, the house of its children—. This is not a way of life—. Under the cloud of war, it is humanity hanging on a cross of iron.

I implore this government to back off and to recognize what it is doing with Canada's reputation, what evil it is inflicting in the world. Back off. Rethink this and for heaven's sake, do not proceed with this legislation.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I have just a brief question that I would like to put to the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. I first of all want to compliment him on his excellent speech and comments that he made on Bill C-6, which the House is debating today.

I am particularly interested in the comments that the member made on the whole question of conversion. Looking at some of the information we have, Canada sold around \$1.5 billion worth of arms annually in the 1980s, and I would like to hear the member speak a bit further on some of the methods or steps or ways that we might use for conversion as the way to help those workers and industries which currently produce arms to produce goods for the peaceful sector, if you like.

I would like to hear the member comment a little further on that. I think that is an important aspect of what we must try to do in Canada and in the other countries of the world if we are going to try and break the arms race.

Mr. de Jong: I thank my colleague very much for the question. Unfortunately, I do not have all of my statistics with me today, but groups like some of the peace institutes have put out columns which show \$1 spent on child care, \$1 spent on education, \$1 spent on housing, \$1 spent on hospitalization and so forth. In other words, \$1 spent in the peace and the social sectors creates so many more jobs than does a dollar spent in the production of arms.

Some claim that the production of arms is really the great job generator. That is not true. Partly because of the high sophistication of armaments today it is not very often job creative. To speak of the defence industry as the creator of a great number of jobs is not quite accurate.