

zines, books and newspapers. The petitioners remind us that uninhibited dissemination of the printed word is a cornerstone of democracy, culture and education, and that a literate and productive society will be negatively affected by GST application.

May I remind honourable senators that this petition was signed by 1,577 citizens.

QUESTION PERIOD

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

KAON PROJECT—CANADIAN FUNDING—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Lorna Marsden: Honourable senators, last week the *Vancouver Sun* reported on the situation with respect to the KAON project in British Columbia. The government had promised to fund a significant portion of the particle accelerator at the University of British Columbia. The report in the newspaper stated that the Minister of Science, the Honourable William Winegard, had launched another study to find out whether Canada should contribute in the U.S. or in Switzerland instead of contributing to the science project at the University of British Columbia.

I would ask the Leader of the Government in the Senate whether this report is true?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, that is a good question. This is the first I have heard of it. My understanding was that there were still discussions going on between us and the government of British Columbia on this matter, but I shall hasten to find out.

ELIMINATION OF SCIENCE COUNCIL OF CANADA—EFFECT ON ACCESSIBILITY OF INFORMATION

Hon Lorna Marsden: Honourable senators, under circumstances that have existed in this country for quite sometime, one could phone the Science Council of Canada, one of the leading advisory bodies that was accessible to the public, and ask them the answer to that question. One would receive an answer because it was their mandate and practice to keep well informed on the situation of science and technology policy in this country. However, as we all know, the government has decided to cut out that agency; at least, that was the announcement in the budget plans.

I would ask the Leader of the Government in the Senate how a citizen can find out what is happening on the KAON project in the future if there is no such agency and if the newspaper reports are as confusing as the one I have just reported on?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the government is prepared to invest considerable resources in the KAON project, and the public, including my honourable friend, may find out by asking questions of the

responsible minister. I have undertaken to convey her question to Mr. Winegard and I shall do so this very afternoon.

It is true that the KAON project is a controversial one in the scientific community. I am aware that there are those who oppose the expenditure of federal government money on that project. They do so because they believe there are other priorities which should take precedence.

That is not the view of the government, nor is it the view of a great many other people in the scientific community. We made a decision on the matter and we will stay with that decision because we believe it was made for all the right reasons. The honourable senator will be aware that, while there has been opposition, there is also considerable support for the project and for the federal government's involvement in it.

Senator Marsden: Honourable senators, I am glad to hear the government intends to stay with that decision, but almost all large science projects are controversial. My question concerns the decision to cut out the Science Council of Canada. It would seem to me that it is precisely the kind of advice that agencies like the Science Council gave on the KAON project that were so useful to government in making up its mind. The additional advantage of the Science Council is not only in its advice to government, but that it is held in high regard by members of the public. It may be possible for me to ask the minister a question now, but it is not possible for the majority of people to have such quick access. It is the public accessibility that will be missing.

● (1610)

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, what was announced in the budget Tuesday with regard to the liquidation of the Science Council of Canada does not mean that the government or the public will be deprived of an independent source of advice on science policy. On the contrary. For one thing, there is the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology set up under this government some time ago which fills that role quite admirably.

Senator Marsden: Honourable senators, I am afraid I must disagree with the minister. The NAB does not publish most of its papers. They circulate in the underground. We all read them, that is true, but they are not public documents. We know people who sit on the National Advisory Board. We ask them. Their lips are sealed. They are private advisors to the cabinet.

I would ask the minister to check on that matter of public access. If the NAB were open, could we please have free access to all the papers they have published since they were established so that those papers could be distributed to such good citizens as students and individuals who do not know board members?

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, that is a matter I will take up with my cabinet colleagues. I will let the honourable senator know.