

*Research and Development*

done results in a return in permanently reduced health care costs of 100 to one. But if you tidy it all up the ratio perhaps for the over-all field is in the range of 10 to one or 20 to one.

Any government which stands before this House and tells the country we are in a time of restraint and that we must save money by cutting expenditure on health research is simply being stupid. I am sorry I have to use that word but I cannot think of a more fitting term to apply to the kind of approach this government has been following.

I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, evidence of the crime. I consider the policies of this government a crime. I want to cite a number of examples which can only open one's eyes more to the situation that has resulted. Not only in the long run but even in the short run all of us are affected in terms of higher costs and in a reduced ability to improve a health care delivery system because of decreased funding. On this side of the House we are not the only ones concerned about this as Liberal speakers have attempted to point out. They have suggested that perhaps we are panicking over a situation which they feel is well under control. However, all we have to do is look outside of the House to an organization known as Canadians for Health Research. That organization, which now consists of 200,000 people, was born approximately a year ago as a result of the emergency situation which exists in the area of health care and research funding.

My hon. friend from the Liberal side who has been wincing at my comments will soon be able to rise and explain. I am sorry, I do not know his constituency because he speaks so rarely in this place. Perhaps he can identify himself, Mr. Speaker. I will let him do so if he wishes. I understand he is a former scientist and will perhaps make his comments known.

We know that some 200,000 Canadians, lay people, people from various health professions and from all walks of life have demonstrated their concern at this government's lack of vision and understanding, by forming an organization known as Canadians for Health Research. Through such an organization they might increase the awareness of the public to the dirty deeds of this government and hopefully express the consternation of the research community to the public. By this method the government might be pressured in some way to change and reverse its negative role, a role which has been practised far too long.

No one says that research does not cost money. I certainly agree that it does. I contend that the benefits of research, as I have already mentioned, far outnumber the initial costs. In the past seven or eight years medical and scientific research in all fields in this country has been starved for lack of funding. The number of researchers and scientists has thinned out to a point where virtually no new people are coming into the research field because there simply is not the funding and there are no prospects of adequate employment in that area. This results in a deterioration of our research capacity together with a feeling of utter instability in the research community. We have a good peer review system in this country which reviews project applications on a regular basis in order to weed out bad projects. But the lack of funding is resulting in the cancellation

[Mr. Yewchuk.]

not only of bad projects but of excellent and productive projects which have already been under way, setting aside any exception for consideration of new projects or giving consideration to future projects submitted to the committee for approval.

Because of these Liberal policies basic research in Canada is becoming a dying field. Yet without it we all know that Canada can never hope to contribute internationally or even put to use its findings here at home to compete internationally.

Let me point out how important increased funding in basic and clinical research is by citing some examples of significant developments in the area of cancer research—colon cancer recognition by a blood test developed by Dr. Phillip Gold of Montreal; recognition of lung cancer antigens, a protein in the blood, which is of assistance to the diagnosis and perhaps treatment of lung cancer, developed by another researcher, Dr. Julia Levy of Vancouver; recognition of leukemia antigens by Dr. Michael Baker of Toronto. Similar work in the cancer antigen field is being done here in Ottawa by researchers at the Ottawa General Hospital, and perhaps other places. All these are very important contributions pioneered here in this country.

This year because of a substantial cut in research funding many of these projects will not be funded at all, or funded to such a low level that it is impossible to carry them on in a meaningful way. The result will be that this research will be done elsewhere. Because the work has been good and internationally recognized someone else will pick it up and do it. Canada will therefore remain at the bottom of the list of contributing western industrialized nations to this important field of research. Important, I might add because cancer has become one of Canada's top killers bar none. It is a serious disease and a serious problem and the government is freezing research in that area.

The former minister of science and technology has now gone to greener pastures with the National Capital Commission. He espoused the theory that each research program should be examined in the planning stage and, if it were cheaper to buy the results abroad than to carry out the work here, we should buy it. While that is perhaps a valid view for certain limited technical questions, I wish to list its fundamental flaws.

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First, the less we do here the less we will be able to do here. Research cannot be turned on and off like a water tap in a sink. It will never be economical to carry out work here unless related work is being carried out here on a continuing basis.

Second, and perhaps this is the most important consideration against this idea or notion that you can buy research, is that no nation sells knowledge except as a loss leader. They sell products and services derived from those products and they are quite properly sold at a profit. The further loss of our economic independence would be reflected by an even worse balance of payments problem if the long range effects of "make or buy" are ignored. The decline of the research capability here means that foreign advances will be applied here incompletely