

That the government take immediate steps to stop this confusion and to cut administrative costs by paying producers on a straightforward plan, on established boundaries, based on a fixed sum, on a per annum basis, to all farmers within the boundaries.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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FORESTRY

CALL FOR TABLING OF OMOND SOLANDT REPORT—MOTION
UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Madam Speaker, I too rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43. Having regard to a report entitled Forest Research in Canada, which was commissioned and filed with the government in 1979, and which lists some startling conclusions and wide-ranging recommendations, and having regard to the fact that the report predicts the most serious consequences should the governments of the provinces and Ottawa fail not only to improve forest-related research efforts but as well to assure that the universities are sufficiently funded to produce scientists and engineers for the task, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Richmond-South Delta (Mr. Siddon):

That the report by Omond Solandt entitled Forest Research in Canada be tabled in the House and referred to the appropriate standing committee for study and that the minister be required to report on the action the government intends to take to implement the recommendations contained in the document.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

GOVERNMENT'S CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH FUNDING

Mr. Gordon Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Madam Speaker, I welcome the Minister of State for Science and Technology back. We can now get to some of the really important questions of the day.

I would like to remind the minister of his highly touted press announcement of January 19 wherein he reaffirmed the government's commitment to increase spending on research and development to 1.5 per cent of gross national product by 1985. In the same breath he announced that the government's share

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would be reduced from 39 per cent to 33 per cent. Would the minister now explain to the House that he has failed to meet this commitment which he has been expressing for a year and that he has misled the House, the entire science community I might add, and the people of Canada by reversing this policy in the most important economic back-up structure the country could be involved in today?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is in error in thinking that I may have misled the House. The increase in expenditure in relation to science and technology over the past year is well on that track for achieving that 1.5 per cent figure, which we had established. Indeed, I am confident that the estimates for next year will again show the kind of significant increases which are necessary for us to reach the objective we have established for 1985.

● (1415)

The hon. member refers to the decline in the percentage of government effort as a proportion of the over-all efforts within our economy directed toward research and development. It should be clear to all hon. members that what we are projecting is the participation by the federal government of one third in the over-all objective of 1.5 per cent. Although it is a decline in percentage, it is a decline over a much higher over-all figure and, indeed, it represents a very significant increase in effort on the part of the federal government.

Mr. Gilchrist: Madam Speaker, on May 5, 1980, I asked the minister if he would be supporting the five-year plan for funding to NSERC, MRC and other councils. He assured me by saying:

I will do more than that; I will increase the funding considerably above the figures put forward by the Conservatives.

Would the minister now explain the reduction in NRC funding from 24 per cent to the 11 per cent or 12 per cent or 13 per cent rates of which I have just been advised rather peripherally?

Mr. Roberts: Madam Speaker, the hon. member referred to the granting councils in the first part of his question, and in the second part he referred to the NRC, the National Research Council. I take it that the hon. member is referring to the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council. In that case I can say that the five-year plan presented by NSERC is one which I support. The funding which is required for the first year to meet the commitments under that plan has been granted. While definitive decisions have not yet been taken with regard to funding for the second year, I am seeking to obtain as much funding as I possibly can for those programs.

Mr. Gilchrist: Madam Speaker, there has been universal condemnation of the MRC and NSERC funding announced by the government of late. All the newspaper are carrying reports on the matter and all the scientists are deploring the