

over some of its centres to the private sector", as we read in *La Presse* on March 13.

Is this how Canada intends to be competitive on international markets? Isn't it time to invest? To invest in our richest and often most neglected resource, our own people? It is high time Canada realized how important science, engineering and postsecondary education are and seriously reconsidered many of its objectives concerning education. If it wants to provide scientific and technical companies with the resources they need to be competitive in the twenty-first century, it must act now.

The government must make our young people understand the importance of jobs that require specialized training, both scientific and technical. It has a duty to support community colleges, in order to provide training early on instead of providing retraining later through skills upgrading when people are unemployed. Perhaps the government should actually launch an advertising campaign across Canada to correct people's perception of blue collar workers.

If the government was able to reverse cigarette and tobacco acceptance through advertising, it should be able to sell technical and professional training! If we do not train a skilled labour force now, and there are already shortages in some areas, it will be our own fault if we are unable to keep up with the rest of the world.

The government will have a lot of breast-beating to do, and it will only have itself to blame. The percentage of the federal budget earmarked for education has dropped from 7.3 in 1985 to 6.7 in 1988-89. Is this what the government calls preparing for the future?

[*English*]

Many years ago the Prime Minister told this nation he believed that research and development are the basis of a successful country, and I quote him: "The starting line for me is the technological dimension. Either we go into the game and become important players in this major league, or we become a nation that will, during its entire lifetime, play in the Junior B circuit. Research and development and the resulting innovation are the lifeblood of a successful economy and country".

Supply

That is beautiful, isn't it? I did say that was many years ago—in 1983 to be exact. What has really been happening since?

I think we should look closely at the government's commitment since 1984. Let us take the National Research Council for instance. In 1984, approximately \$60 million was cut from NRC's budget. The following are some of the major divisions or projects that were closed or cancelled: the energy division, the Environment Secretariat, the Manufacturing Technology Institute, the Institute for Electro-Chemistry, the Cold Regions Research Institute and, as of February, 1985, 80 lay-off notices were issued as a result of the cutback.

In 1986, an additional \$29 million was cut from the NRC budget. The following projects or divisions were cut: photochemistry and kinetics, electromagnetic and mechanical engineering programs, environmental toxicology programs, aeronautics, construction and physics.

At this point it was announced that over 200 jobs would be eliminated. In February, 1990, NRC President Pierre Perron told *The Citizen* that the following programs and projects would be cut: high-energy physics research to be gone by 1995; the prairie research station; the avalanche research group in B.C.; the Algonquin Park radio observatory to be leased out; tentatively, the low-speed wind tunnel at CFB Uplands; and the move of the Herzberg Institute of Astrophysics to Victoria.

[*Translation*]

With this kind of support, Mr. Speaker, how can we expect a high level of performance? It is time to wake up before it is too late. We have allocated 1.23 per cent of our Gross Domestic Product to research and development. That is half as much as what Japan and Sweden are investing. We can really be proud of our performance! At this rate, Canada's chances to keep up with the pack seem rather slim.

Just now, Canada's record is rather bad. It invests half as much as its main competitors. It has half as many scientists and engineers as the average industrialized nation. Few Canadian businessmen know what science and technology could do for their respective businesses.

Science teaching in our schools is mediocre, which explains Canada's poor performance in international competitions. And as the straw which broke the camel's