

Inquiries of the Ministry

takes the position that the total expenditure on research and development should be raised to the level of 2 per cent of the gross national product by 1972?

Mr. Speaker: I think we are getting involved in a subject which is very wide in scope at this point; it is akin to a debate and I would not think that the further supplementary is in order.

COMMUNICATIONS

SUPPORT BY DR. O. M. SOLANDT OF BELL
CANADA RATE INCREASE

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Some time ago I asked the President of the Treasury Board a question about the appearance of Dr. Solandt before the Canadian Transport Commission. The minister gave me an answer privately but I think the matter is of sufficient public interest to justify an answer being given in the house.

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Speaking from recollection, Dr. Solandt appeared before the Canadian Transport Commission at the request of the Bell Telephone Company of Canada. He went there as chairman of the Science Council of Canada and his remarks were addressed to advocating before the Transport Commission an increase in expenditures on research and development in Canada generally. That was the purpose of his intervention, as well as to testify to the good record of the Bell Telephone Company of Canada in this particular field.

Mr. J. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): In view of the fact that the President of the Treasury Board has promised the house for a number of months that he will make a statement on motions concerning the government's general science policy, will he now undertake to make such a statement in the house some time next week?

Mr. Drury: I know the house has a limited agenda ahead of it and I am not sure it will be sitting all next week.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): A further supplementary to the minister arising from his answer on the subject of Dr. Solandt's appearance before the Canadian Transport Commission. Do I understand that Dr. Solandt appeared as chairman of the Science Council in support of further research and in support of an increase in the rates charged by

[Mr. Stanfield.]

the Bell Telephone Company to enable the company, as it claimed, to do further research?

Mr. Drury: Dr. Solandt made it quite clear in his statement—unfortunately I do not have a copy with me—that he was not offering an opinion or evidence in relation to any increase in rates—whether this was necessary or not—on behalf of Bell Telephone.

Mr. Lewis: May I ask the minister whether he has considered the propriety of the chairman of a government board appearing before another public body at the request of, and in support of, necessarily, a private or public corporation asking for favours from that public body?

Mr. Drury: I am not sure I would agree that the applicant in this case was seeking favours. I reject the dialectic used by the hon. member. Dr. Solandt appeared at the request of Bell Telephone Company to offer expert evidence in relation to the research and development effort being put forward by Bell. He was not asked to address himself, nor did he address himself, to the question whether or not a rate increase was necessary or desirable.

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I suggest that we are becoming involved in a debate. We are now discussing matters that have already happened. This is clearly debate, and I suggest that this type of question should not be asked at this time.

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

ESTABLISHMENT OF INFORMATION AGENCIES

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I address a question to the Prime Minister with respect to the task force on information which was appointed last August. In view of the importance of the assignment given to this task force, may I ask the Prime Minister whether he has yet received a report and, if not, can he give the house any indication when he does anticipate receiving a report?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have received a report and it is now being considered by the government.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): In view of the importance of the