

*Oral Questions*

Council, which tells Canadians how they can combat the toxicity of pollutants.

I want to ask why a Government that says it is trying to fight pollution has decided to axe the toxicology section at the National Research Council. Is that an acceptable priority?

[English]

**Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology):** Mr. Speaker, I have not had the chance to examine in detail the reallocations that were made. I wish to take this opportunity to assure the House that there will be no injury to public health, to public safety, or to the environment. If the programs from which the reallocations are intended to come are not already carried out in another Department of the Government or in a university, I shall not be signing the Estimates which have to be produced for next year.

## SCIENTISTS' POSITION

**Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of State for Science and Technology. Would he tell us who among the NRC, the Science Council, representatives of any scientific organization in the country, any industrial scientists, or any of the hundreds of academic scientists who have written to him and various Members of the House, recommended the savaging of the NRC for space research or any of the other hare-brained cuts or reallocations in scientific research support the Government has perpetrated?

**Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology):** Mr. Speaker, I could cite hundreds of examples, letters, and recommendations which I have received from all the associations to which the Hon. Member referred, telling me of the need to readjust our priorities, to ensure that we have the necessary highly qualified personnel, to ensure that we are in a position to cope with the new society in terms of strategic technologies which underpin our industrial capacity, and to ensure that we are in a position to stay in the fast current which will lead us into the next century. That is what these people are telling me.

## GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville):** Mr. Speaker, of course the Minister has not answered my question. Perhaps he can answer the following one. For a Government for which trust is a problem, how does it expect scientists whose advice has already been ignored to believe now that they will have any impact at all upon government policy by participation in the so-called four point program to strengthen science announced in the Throne Speech?

**Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology):** Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech is quite explicit. If there is one area where the Government has identified a clear priority, it is in the area of research and development and science related activities. This is why we have identified \$1 billion of new money for university funding, and this is why we

have attempted through industrial subagreements to allay regional disparity through science and technology and all other programs inherent in the Throne Speech.

[Translation]

## ESTABLISHMENT OF ELECTROCHEMICAL RESEARCH CENTRE IN MAURICIE

**Mr. Gilles Grondin (Saint-Maurice):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Science and Technology. My region of central Mauricie is recognized as one of the cradles of the electrochemical and electrometallurgical industry in Canada.

Following the 1984 election, the Government announced that an electrochemical research centre, planned for central Mauricie, would not be built, but that it was negotiating the conclusion, the content and the administration of an agreement for a research program with the IREQ. Since then, nothing.

In view of the importance of this research centre for the economic recovery of our region, could the Minister tell us what he is planning to do to expedite these negotiations? Will he have the guts to reconsider his decision and decide to build a centre separate from that of the IREQ, as suggested and wished for by the NRC?

• (1430)

[English]

**Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Hon. Member on his first question in the House. The project to which he is referring has nothing to do with any involvement of the National Research Council but would come about as a result of the subagreement we have with Quebec. Let me tell the Hon. Member that there is perhaps a greater sensitivity in the Province of Quebec for science and technology, and that is why we have a \$100 million science and technology subagreement with that province. I will do whatever I can to examine the Hon. Member's concern.

[Translation]

## REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN IREQ AND HYDRO-QUEBEC

**Mr. Gilles Grondin (Saint-Maurice):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if he could indicate the terms of the agreement between the IREQ and Quebec Hydro concerning the centre and the possibility for NRC people to do research at the IREQ centre?

[English]

**Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology):** Mr. Speaker, the initiative has come from the Province of Quebec. Question Period would not lend itself to permit me to give the Hon. Member every detail of the initiative, but I will undertake to procure it and communicate it to him in another fashion.