

Supply

research and development and we would like to proceed with that as soon as possible.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, in view of the important debate that the Liberals have before us today and because we would like to have the opportunity to see just what the government Whip is planning to put forward, we too would like to see the House move forward with the opposition motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Obviously, the hon. member does not have unanimous consent to move his motion at this time.

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SUPPLY**ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 82—RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition) moved:

That this House recognize that research and development, and the resulting innovation, are the lifeblood of a successful economy and country and that Canada must increase its level of research and development in order to ensure economic growth in an increasingly competitive and technologically literate global community.

• (1310)

He said: Madam Speaker, the words of the motion we have put before the House today with regard to the level of commitment by the government to research and development in the country have been chosen very carefully.

The objective of our motion is to elicit support from members on all sides of the House to enlarge Canada's commitment to the goal of increasing, rather than decreasing, the level of research and development carried out in the country.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, the House will note that the motion has taken some terms from the Prime Minister's vocabulary. Liberal Members agree with the goal the Prime Minister set himself before he became Prime Minister, and that was to increase substantially the budget for research and development. The reason why we present this motion is that the goal set by the Prime Minister did not materialize.

[*English*]

Before he became Prime Minister, the right hon. member made several very positive commitments. In 1983 he said with regard to research and development, and I quote:

Either we go into the game and become important players in this major league or we become a nation that will, during our entire lifetime, play in the Junior B circuit.

In 1984 the Prime Minister said the following:

We have to double our research and development commitment and triple our resolve to reach it.

In the same year he said:

The production, application, and diffusion of modern technology is not going to help us if Canadians are not trained and educated in its use.

Also in 1984 he said, and I quote again:

We are going to double our collective national commitment to research and development within the life of our first government mandate.

What has happened since those commitments were made? Did we double our spending on research and development?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): No, we did not. In 1983 Canada spent 1.35 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product on research and development. In 1988 that figure was 1.32 per cent. In other words, far from double. In fact, it was slightly less when expressed as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product, a percentage of our economy.

Have we moved up in comparison to our major competitors? No, we have not. Japan, the United States, West Germany and France are at roughly double in spending on research and development as a per cent of Gross Domestic Product. To use the Prime Minister's term, we are in the Junior B league when it comes to research and development, despite his commitment that his government would put us in the major leagues before his first mandate expired.

Another commitment made by the Prime Minister was, and I quote:

We are going to close that gap by making biotechnology and genetic research a top priority.

Did we close the gap on biotechnology and genetic research?

Some hon. members: No.