

Government Orders

question in this House. I did not see the Speaker rule against that. I wish she would answer the question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Chair does not wish to get into debate. The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Duplessis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Science and Technology)): I listened carefully to the hon. member and I know that since she was elected she made a lot of recommendations concerning NRC scientists. I would therefore like to give her the assurance that no new person-year reductions have been forced upon the National Research Council by this government. In fact, the National Research Council is now negotiating an agreement with Treasury Board for increased security and flexibility in the management of its human resources. That memorandum relates to the planned previously announced cuts in the NRC'S permanent staff. Those cuts are part of a well-known effort to restructure and re-organize the National Research Council. The down sizing in full-time jobs at NRC was outlined in public papers, including the Estimates. In fact, the NRC will do its utmost to relocate the employees affected by the cuts, either at NRC or elsewhere in the scientific community in Canada.

In the open letter from the President of the NRC, he points out on page 5, and I quote—it is the President talking:—“that the NRC commits itself to maintaining the duties of the groups concerned and that it will do its best to make sure that they be transferred to a more appropriate activity. We will take into account the needs and aspirations of the people affected. Their application for suitable jobs at NRC for which they will be qualified will have priority.

Therefore, I can assure my colleague that, as far as the scientists are concerned, if ever a field of research had to be transferred to universities for instance, the whole thing will be done in a most civilized manner.

[*English*]

Mrs. Catterall: The hon. member has left me time to say little else in reply except that is absolute nonsense. Since I am not going to have time to give her the information she needs, I suggest she dig it out herself. I

suggest she find out how many people have been forced into early retirement and what mechanisms are being used to force them into early retirement, and how they are being bribed not to talk about why they left.

In fact, from 1984 through 1986, NRC lost 221 person-years. That is brains. Yet management is being increased this year by 12. That is management, not scientists, not the people who do the work, not the people who go around the world creating Canada's international reputation. This year they are cutting another 125, 30 researchers and 110 technical support staff. That is the best information I have at this point in time.

I suggest the member not speak in the House until she has done her own research and found out what is happening. We are losing brains. We are losing them to the United States and to Europe. We are losing them to retirement. That is a crying shame and a waste of the most important resource this country has.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. On debate, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands for ten minutes, plus five minutes questions and comment.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, the excellent contribution to the debate by my colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa West, may have rendered redundant some of the comments I was going to make. Earlier this morning, the member for Ottawa Centre made an excellent presentation as well.

However, I want to make a few other comments and I have a few quotations and some figures that might assist my friends opposite in their attempts to make up for five years of neglect and cuts that have damaged one of Canada's foremost scientific institutions.

The National Research Council is clearly one of the most distinguished scientific organizations in this country. Since its founding in 1916, it has been a leader in the scientific field here and abroad. Indeed, out of the National Research Council, as hon. members know, the Atomic Energy of Canada Limited body grew as a result of the research carried on. In addition, the Defence Research Board was a product of that particular council. It has been the foundation stone for contributions to scientific research at Canada's universities, certainly since World War II, and in the period before through its