

Oral Questions

Member that we must spend more but I also announced that we are spending more: \$1 billion over the next five years into universities, hundreds of millions of dollars into the provinces, \$800 million to get us to the new frontier. These people might want to torque around in the 19th century but we are looking to the 21st century.

INDUSTRIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister would not want to mislead the House. Pursuant to the Minister's own estimates for the National Research Council of Canada, \$34 million will be cut in this fiscal year from direct support for industrial innovation and development. Will the Minister tell the House why these cut-backs which will jeopardize Canadian industry are being made? Do not be speaking out of both sides of your mouth.

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the reallocations being undertaken by the NRC were announced yesterday. There are no reallocations to the Industrial Support Program.

REQUEST FOR RESTORATION OF FUNDING

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the same Minister. The Nobel Prize given to Dr. Polanyi yesterday indicated the respect the international scientific community has for the work of Canadian scientists. The same day, the Government negated that achievement by cutting many of the basic research programs conducted by the National Research Council. Today will the Government recognize the achievement of Dr. Polanyi and many others at the NRC by restoring the very small amount necessary, some \$20 million per year, so that future Canadian researchers will have the same opportunities Dr. Polanyi had?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, Dr. Polanyi has not been associated with the National Research Council for some time. He is a professor at the University of Toronto. I just reiterated what was in the Throne Speech. There is a strengthening of our university research capability which must be linked with the training and teaching of highly qualified personnel to the tune of \$1 billion.

BASIC RESEARCH FUNDING

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, Dr. Polanyi is a long-term critic of efforts on the part of Canadian Governments in the field of scientific research. In 1976 he said:

We are in the process of forcing mediocrity on our established researchers, while denying even that dubious privilege to our aspiring scientists.

Does the Minister agree with Dr. Polanyi's concerns about funding basic research, and if so, what plans does the Government have to redress the disaster dealt to the NRC?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, yes, I do support Dr. Polanyi's assertion that we do have to spend more money. That is why I announced more money for university research. The students who have worked with Dr. Polanyi throughout all these years would certainly not agree that there is mediocrity in their university.

SCIENTISTS EMPLOYED BY COUNCIL

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, what explanation is the Minister prepared to offer to the many scientists who have worked for the NRC for 20 or 30 years, who have gained national or international recognition for their work, and who have been told in the last day or two that their employment has been terminated? Is that the kind of thanks this country will give to those talented people?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, first I am pleased that the Hon. Member has given me the chance to say that their employment has not been terminated and perhaps to ask him why he would insist on destroying the morale of the finest institution we have in this country.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT'S PRIORITIES

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Science and Technology.

The reallocation of funds referred to by the Minister is proceeding on the basis of some very strange priorities.

Dr. Lark Kerwin tells us that projects in the medical field will be cut, and this includes, for instance, research on the preservation of blood plasma. And meanwhile, the Government wants to support U.S. space projects.

I would like to ask the Minister where this Government's priorities lie. Should the health of Canadians come first, or should we support U.S. space projects? Where are this Government's priorities?

• (1425)

[English]

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, just to put the record straight, I will quote Dr. Kerwin who said: "We are still Canada's largest and strongest general purpose research agency and do intend to go on into a period of expansion".

[Translation]

CUT-BACKS IN TOXICOLOGY RESEARCH—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, among the areas that unfortunately will suffer cut-backs, we find the ecotoxicology section at the National Research