

Supply

Finally, the hon. member for Mackenzie raised a point of order concerning certain data presented in the Part III report prepared for the Department of Agriculture. Specifically, the hon. member complained of the way the appropriation or possible appropriation is given for the Farm Credit Corporation listed as a non-budgetary item.

At the time I suggested to the hon. member that I did not think the Chair could address this question as a point of order. I have subsequently had an opportunity to review this matter and have noted that the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts presented last October offered certain criticisms of the way the Department of Agriculture has presented some information in the Part III reports in previous years. As I originally suggested February 22, one avenue open to the hon. member to obtain redress of his complaint is to raise it in the Standing Committee on Agriculture or in the Public Accounts Committee. It is not an issue which the Chair has the authority to resolve.

I thank all hon. members who raised these important issues related to the Estimates process and all those who contributed to the discussion and assisted the Chair in the consideration of the matter. I certainly feel that while certain members may indeed have a grievance in this area, it is not a question of privilege.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South) moved:

That this House condemn the Government for its failure to support the National Research Council as Canada's premier research institution and its failure to promote basic scientific research in Canada.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak in the House this morning on the subject of the National Research Council of Canada. I would like to start by putting our subject in a context that directly concerns the government: that of the federal deficit.

[*English*]

I participated in a debate last evening in Kitchener on the subject of the goods and services tax. On attempting to return to Ottawa late last night, or early this morning, we could not land because of the fog. It struck me that the good people of Kitchener, before I left there, were convinced, having listened to a discussion on the goods

and services tax, that Ottawa was definitely enshrouded in fog.

What we heard from the supporters of the GST last night was very much an explanation—

Some hon. members: Supporters?

Mr. Manley: Well, there were supporters there. There was the hon. member for Cambridge, who acquitted himself very well, I might add.

The explanation for the infliction of the pain of the goods and services tax on Canada was primarily that it was a solution to our deficit. It struck me that this was ironic in the context of a week in which we have become increasingly aware of Canada's failure and the government's failure to make a real commitment to the needs of science and technology in this country.

You see, Mr. Speaker, there are three ways to address the national deficit. There are expenditure cuts, and we have heard lots about those. There are tax increases, and that is what the goods and services tax is really all about. The third way is that if we can increase Canada's productivity as a nation, if we can grow, if our economy can expand, if our people can be made more productive, then we have the opportunity to do the kinds of things we want to do as a generous nation, we can maintain the programs that we have and reduce our deficit.

It is not just a matter of cutting expenditures or raising taxes. If we lose sight of the importance of building our economic strength as a nation, then we are doomed to failure at deficit reduction; we are doomed to a generation of tax increases.

We have had some fairly significant new information come forward this week in the area of science and technology. We have learned that the Minister for Science does not believe in the matching grants program for the university granting councils. We know, from evidence given to the Industry, Science and Technology Committee yesterday by the president of the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council, that the failure to replace the matching funding, which is scheduled to end in the upcoming fiscal year, will be devastating—and that word is his—devastating to the granting council.

On top of that, there was a memorandum made public on Monday from the president of the National Research Council which contains some startling comments by that individual. Among other things it says that NRC intends to limit its involvement in basic research to that required to maintain a minimal scientific insurance policy for the nation. Not only that, he says the next five-year plan for NRC will propose a clear policy statement and strategy on privatization and divestiture. He says that there are