

Supply

ment's share has gone down since this government has been in office.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair was able to keep his reply so brief. I will be taking 10 minutes because of the number of members on our side who wish to participate in this debate that we consider important, and I will therefore try to focus my comments fairly quickly.

As I have already said, we believe that the motion is one that should be supported by members from all sides, including the government side, on a vote because the wording of the motion very carefully acknowledges the contribution by the Prime Minister to this debate.

Notwithstanding the comments that the hon. minister made a few minutes ago, I would suggest to him that it is time to consider whether the state of our effort in science and technology and research and development in Canada has not gone beyond the point of partisan bickering and reached the point where we need to strive to find common ground where we can work together and where we can encourage our young Canadians, as well as all of the players in science and technology to work together to solve the problems, which are very significant problems indeed.

In very simple terms, I guess our problem in Canada is that we are buying more than we produce and we are doing it regularly, consistently and we are doing it in products that contain technology. Our wealth, which is considerable, has been based throughout our history on our very substantial natural resources. What we cut down and what we dig out of the ground and what we harvest from our soil and from our waters is what has made us one of the richest nations on earth.

But as the world changes, as the global economy becomes more increasingly based upon science-based innovation, upon value-added goods and services, we find that we are going to be facing a decrease in our wealth and in our standard of living, and we are going to have more and more difficulty meeting the expectations of our population.

We have not succeeded in being as adept as many other countries have been at adding value to the prod-

ucts that they produce and at innovating in ways that ensure their continued wealth.

I think the statistics, some of which have been referred to earlier today, are a very good indication of just exactly where we stand in terms of the performance of research and development in Canada and, therefore, our ability to produce science based innovation at all levels in the future.

I am citing a report of the Premier's Council of Ontario in which the performance of France, Germany, Japan, The Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada is considered. In terms of gross expenditure on R and D as a percentage of GDP we are the lowest.

• (1620)

Industry funded R and D as a percentage of GDP, again we are the lowest. Government funded R and D as a percentage of GDP, we are the second lowest. Government performed R and D as a percentage of GDP, we are in the middle. Higher education R and D as a percentage of GDP, we are the second lowest.

Domestic patents per 100,000 inhabitants, we are the second lowest. International patents granted by population, we are the lowest. Scientists and engineers in the labour force by population, we are the lowest. Number of technology intensive industries with positive trade balance, we are the lowest.

I think a very great indicator of how we are lagging behind on these important issues is the very substantial trade deficit we have in advanced technology goods in Canada. Where do we go from here? What happens? I know the minister raised the question about the government's role. The implication was that we on this side are suggesting that the government alone should spend enough money in order to increase the GERD ratio, the Gross Expenditures on Research and Development ratio, to a higher number, perhaps 2.5 per cent. I do not think that is what we are saying at all. What we are looking to the government for is leadership on this issue.

What we have in Canada is a bad state of affairs that has been getting worse. I hasten to say there has been a lot of consultation, a lot of talk, a lot of rhetoric, rhetoric such as we have included in the motion. I agree that the establishment of the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology, chaired by the Prime Minister, is a