

was Prime Minister. I am truly curious why they did not choose to use the words of the previous Prime Minister and whether the fact that they did not reflects the absence of any real policy for research and development during the time the party of the Official Opposition held office.

The Leader of the Official Opposition has chosen to select the words of his motion from the book *Where I Stand* by the Prime Minister and related utterances by the Prime Minister. I would have suggested that he might have looked a little further from the source and he would have found this: "In 1968, however, when Pierre Elliott Trudeau became Prime Minister, we were spending 1.4 per cent of the Gross National Product in this vital job productive area of research and development. For a decade we spent only .9 per cent. In the last two years we have spent 1.13 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product for research and development".

• (1340)

My question is why was Pierre Elliott Trudeau not quoted on the subject of research and development? Given the record of the investment of the previous governments between 1968 and 1984, leaving out that brief period of Conservative government, would he tell us whether what we have heard now is a policy change as compared to the previous occasion in which the Official Opposition had the opportunity really to do something about research and development?

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): We chose the words of the present Prime Minister on which to build our motion because it is that Prime Minister and his party who are presently in office, who hold the levers of government in their hands, and who are today in a position to do something about the problem which I sense is one on which there is a consensus in this House and in this country.

I think it very important that we deal with the situation as it is today, and equally or more important, as we want it to be tomorrow. We want to call upon all members of this House to send a message, not just to the government but to the private sector, to the entire country and to the world that we have to do better and that we are going to do better.

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Let us be frank about it. This motion will not carry unless we have the support of, if not all, a substantial number of members on the government side of the House. We thought that we would draft the motion in a way designed to put the supporters of the government to the test and give them a chance to support their own Prime Minister.

I see, Madam Speaker, you are giving me a signal that the time for comment is ending. We recognize who happens to be the Prime Minister of the country for the time being and who has the responsibility of government. We want to give him and his colleagues a chance to join with us in sending the right message in support of research and development to this entire country and to the world as to what Canada needs in order for us to achieve our objectives for it now and in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I did not want to interrupt the hon. Leader of the Opposition but time for questions and comments has expired. Resuming debate with the hon. minister.

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Madam Speaker, I do enjoy the opportunity today to speak to the motion of the hon. Leader of the Opposition concerning research development and innovation.

At the outset, I would like to say that I agree with the hon. member in terms of the importance of research and development to a nation's economy. It is unfortunate, however, that the opposition has chosen to trivialize this subject by making it a confidence motion which they know that, in accordance with all the rules and traditions of this House, the government will vote against.

As well, I would like to comment about how incomplete I believe this motion is in terms of what makes a country, particularly this one, competitive. In the race to stay competitive in this world market, Canada's advantage in natural resources and our geographic position next to the great trading markets will no longer be enough. In today's world, innovation has become the key to economic strength.

What gives a country a particular edge in innovation that is necessary to make that country internationally competitive? Certainly the level of research and development is important. There are other factors equally important, and sometimes in the growth of a country the economy rests more on other matters than on R and D.