

Oral Questions

Winnipeg-Fort Garry and his colleague are really saying that they are against space research of any nature or kind whatsoever. The questions of those Hon. Members are disguised, but that is their position. They are just opposed to it, and they will twist and turn anything at all to escape that conclusion.

SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS—GREEN PAPER COMMENT

Mr. David Berger (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, I would like to try out another question on the Deputy Prime Minister. Another statement which was made in the Green Paper yesterday was that it was uncertain whether Canada was producing the number of scientists and engineers required to develop and sustain an advanced industrial structure. Recently Mr. MacNabb, the President of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, was much more frank about it. With the numbers of students presently in the sciences, we just cannot achieve—

Mr. Speaker: Does the Hon. Member have a supplementary question?

Mr. Berger: —anything like the 2.5 per cent goal. Does he agree with the Secretary of State for External Affairs that this situation is uncertain, or does he agree with Mr. MacNabb? Will his Government back up its promises with swift action rather than equivocation?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member knows that the earlier statements which he ascribed to myself are incorrect. In fact the Government is committed to moving toward the goal of increasing our investment in science and technology to the economic benefit of Canada; to creating permanent jobs in the new areas of technology; and to continuing to support the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council and other initiatives of the Government in a very ambitious way, to the benefit of Canada and our young people.

* * *

● (1450)

INDUSTRY

MITEL CORPORATION—BRITISH TELECOM TAKEOVER PROPOSAL

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, I had a question for the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion who has been acting like a wandering gypsy during this Question Period. If I could, I will direct my question to the Minister of State for Science and Technology.

An Hon. Member: Oh, here he comes.

Mr. Langdon: Here by popular demand. Yet more problems for Mitel are appearing from the proposed takeover by British Telecom, with the announcement made by Bell Canada that it is reconsidering its purchases from Mitel because British Telecom is one of its major rivals. Would the Minister commit

himself to meet urgently with Mitel management in order to urge them to adopt the 18 per cent minority proposal for participation rather than the majority takeover?

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member undoubtedly knows, we intend in due course to meet with the Mitel people in order to hear more about the nature of the deal. With respect to the statement attributed to Bell Canada by *The Globe and Mail*, as the Hon. Member probably knows Bell Canada was investigated some time ago with respect to vertical integration in procurement practices. As a result of this story I have asked two of my colleagues, the Minister of Communications and the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, at least to check into the story to find out if there is some substance to what was reported by *The Globe and Mail*.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. Is it not activities like the kind of activity undertaken by his Ministry, in allowing a major corporation that is so involved in research and development to go into foreign hands, that contribute to the fact that the Government has now indicated publicly that it has abandoned its promise to double R and D spending in Canada by 1988?

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, once again the Hon. Member is stating something that is just not true. We have not allowed or disallowed anything in that respect. All we have done is acknowledge that there is a deal and that in due course we will undoubtedly have an opportunity to review that deal.

I pointed out, and will point out once again for the Hon. Member, that Mitel was in difficult financial straits. The Hon. Member cannot have it both ways. This company has offered to put into Mitel over \$300 million of fresh equity, which will at least ensure that 2,500 Canadian jobs, and 5,000, including international, jobs will be preserved. I am on the side of the workers of Mitel, and I think it is time that the Hon. Member got on the side of the workers of Mitel as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

[Translation]

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

INQUIRY IF EVIDENT SIGNS EXIST OF IMPROVEMENT IN CANADIANS' QUALITY OF LIFE

Mr. Gabriel Desjardins (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment.

Following steps taken by the Minister in March this year in the fight against acid rain, could the Minister inform the