

Patent Act

Mr. Daubney: Mr. Speaker, as a Member concerned about research and technology, and research and development in this country, I find it very disconcerting to hear from the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy), whose only contribution to R and D in the past was as a member of a Cabinet which introduced one of the greatest political boondoggles and scams in Canadian political history, namely, the SRTC. That cost this country billions of dollars in revenue and in lost R and D opportunities. The Hon. Member's personal commitment to R and D was to erect the Lloyd Axworthy memorial building in downtown Winnipeg which is now an empty shell. There again, millions of dollars of taxpayers' money down the chute for his own political glorification prior to the last election.

Mr. Benjamin: That's what you get for trusting private enterprise.

Mr. Axworthy: I would like to pose this question to the Hon. Member who says that he is interested in R and D. The Hon. Member states that there is an empty building in downtown Winnipeg. I wish to tell him what the building was going to do. It was going to be a world class national research centre on robotics and artificial intelligence machines. There is no such institute in this country at the present time. There are four or five in the United States, several in Japan, and several in Europe. There are none in Canada. We decided to put it in Winnipeg, and I know it runs against all Tory principles to have anything of technology going on in Manitoba. We have seen that kind of decision in the past two weeks. We know what their attitude is about having western Canadians undertake research and technology. The fact is that a decision by the Hon. Member's Government to eliminate the funding for that building has left it empty. That is the reason it is empty. If it had been left to a Liberal Government, right now there would be 170 engineers and scientists working with private industry and attracting investment from across the world into Canada. For the first time we would have had a major centre undertaking basic research into that technology. That shows my commitment.

I find it exceedingly strange that a Member who comes from Ottawa has the nerve to stand up and talk about what his Government has done when we see the rape that is going on in the NRC, and the total desecration of research budgets in every department and Crown corporation. Fortunately, when it comes to 1988 and this Member puts his commitment to research on the line, we know what the people of Ottawa will say to him.

Mr. Benjamin: Plague on both your houses.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Ottawa West is rising. Is this question and comment, or debate?

Mr. Daubney: Question and comment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I regret to advise the Hon. Member that the time for question and comment has expired. On debate, the Hon. Member for Regina West.

Mr. Dick: You don't know anything about this.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member suggests that I don't know anything about this. He might be right.

Mr. Lewis: That never stopped you before.

Mr. Benjamin: What I have forgotten will far surpass what he knows, or what he thinks he does.

Both yesterday and today I listened carefully to speeches by Hon. Members on both sides of the argument. I wish to say, Sir, that I am reminded of something in the opening statement of the Winnipeg declaration of 1956 at a CCF national convention during which we spent many hours examining the Canadian economy and society. We said in that declaration that a society motivated only by a desire for profit was basically immoral. I happen to be one of those who believes personally that those in an area such as drugs who would profit from the misfortunes of others are also basically immoral. Those who would profit from picking the pockets of the sick, the poor and the old have to be accused of having minimal social consciences.

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I am not one of those socialists who believes that the Government should own, operate and run everything. I never have believed that. I have always believed in a mixed economy of the private sector, the public sector, the co-operative sector and the voluntary sector. There are some few areas though in which I submit private enterprise has no business. For example, the area of research and development, testing, distribution and sale of drugs for sick people.

We hear about recovery costs for research and development. I agree that that recovery could go on for many years. It could cost millions, tens of millions or hundreds of millions before some new development is arrived at, tested and available to the people who desperately need it.

How do you find out what the costs are of research and development no matter how many years it takes? We would need a system to monitor and make those doing the research and development accountable for every single item and every single hour of expense. But what we will be doing is giving them a blank cheque to recover what they claim to be their costs plus a mark-up, plus a profit for 10 years. We have no way of knowing whether they spent \$10 million or \$100 million. If they claim \$200 million plus their profit, plus their return on investment et cetera, they could recover \$200 million, \$300 million, \$400 million, a billion dollars in 10 years by the kind of price mechanism they will have on a patent protected product.