

Industrial Research Incentives Act

table here correspondence it has had with companies. In many cases this would mark the end of our communications with industry. These communications have to be protected.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to interrupt the minister again but he has been very cordial this evening and I hope he will continue to be so during a serious discussion of these points. If I understood him correctly, he was suggesting that what was being requested was correspondence and other matters referring to the performance of particular firms. It was not my understanding from the statement tabled by the minister about a month ago that this was what the study would consist of; rather, it was a comprehensive analysis of the efficacy of government programs in these areas. Am I correct in that understanding? If I am, would this not be precisely the kind of information that might raise the level of this debate if it were made available?

Mr. Pepin: I confess I am, of course, looking at the matter from the point of view of the government. I might look at it a little differently were I to have the privilege of sitting on the other side of the House, which I have never had. The fact that changes are being introduced is an obvious admission that the programs were not perfect. The arguments that we are putting forward today are an indication that we ourselves were not entirely satisfied with the way the programs were being operated.

Mr. Broadbent: Perhaps they will be even less perfect now.

Mr. Pepin: That is for you to judge. The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby wanted to make a distinction between research and development done by foreign-owned companies and that done by Canadian-owned companies. The department makes no such distinction. We are looking for research done in Canada, be it by Canadian-owned or by foreign-owned companies. We are looking for results, not at the way and by whom they are achieved. As a matter of fact, any money provided through these research and development programs must be used in Canada; this is part and parcel of the philosophy and practice of the research and development programs. The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby then tried to incite me into a discussion on ownership of industry. I will resist that temptation because this question will be brought to the attention of the House by the government as a whole in due course.

[Mr. Pepin.]

On the subject of resource industries he seemed to say there was not much research taking place. If that is what he had in mind, this would be the wrong impression to give. For example, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources of the government of Canada does a substantial amount of research in the petroleum industry. If my memory serves me well, in Edmonton there is an Institute of Petroleum Geology, a federal government research institute, that also does quite an amount of work in this field.

The hon. member also tried to interest me in that very old debate about expenditure on defence research and civilian research. I was pleased to hear him say that he had observed a certain movement in the expenditures of the department from defence to civilian research. I thank the hon. member for underlining that because it is something we have very much at heart. At the same time, I am not at all willing to concede that there should be no research for defence purposes. We dealt with this question at some length a year or so ago in a House of Commons committee.

My contention at that time was that it was very difficult to identify what is civilian and what is military research in many instances; that a lot of civilian research led to military innovation, and a lot of military research led to civilian innovation. I do not think any country in the world—certainly I could not mention one of any substance—can afford the luxury of not undertaking any military research. Although I agree that the emphasis should be put on civilian research, I do not think this country could gamble on not doing the kind of military research that in most instances leads to important civilian progress.

• (9:00 p.m.)

I think if my hon. friend were to cogitate and meditate on the subject for a few minutes, he would himself realize that a tremendous amount of technological progress has been made in recent years which is directly related to military research carried out in the past. It is unfortunate that governments and people seem to give more easily for military than for civilian research. Personally, and in my department, we are trying to emphasize the civilian side, but I do not think we can change history and human nature completely. We can try to improve upon it, and this is what we have been trying to do.