

Oral Questions

western ports. Elevators are being plugged, and farmers are unable to deliver grain, denying them of needed revenue.

I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Hargrave):

That the Minister of Transport immediately request Dr. Hugh Horner to reassume the responsibilities of his former position for a sufficiently long period of time to get the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board out of this mess and the farmers out of a financial squeeze.

Madam Speaker: For its presentation, this motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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SMALL BUSINESS

STEPS TO ENSURE BENEFITS OF SBDB PROGRAM INURE TO SMALL BUSINESS—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Madam Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. In light of the fact that chartered banks and other financial institutions are quoting different rates of interest under the proposed SBDB program, and since the purpose of the SBDB program is to provide interest rate relief to small business, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Beaches (Mr. Young):

That this House instruct the Minister of Finance to take the necessary steps to ensure that the full benefits of the SBDB program accrue to small business and are not used to subsidize chartered bank profits.

Madam Speaker: For presentation, this motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

FUTURE FUNDING—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Gordon Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of State for Science and Technology, who is speaking on constitutional matters today to western Liberals—I suppose he took them with him—I will address my question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

● (1415)

This month the minister's stand-in speaker at the *Financial Post* high technology conference made the same announcement as his colleague, the Minister of Supply and Services, when he stated that:

The federal government faces serious fiscal choices. It is likely that the government will not be in a position to respond financially in anything like the amounts required by the high-tech industries in the 1980s and 1990s.

In plain talk, this means that the government has so fouled up its priorities that it has no money. Does the minister identify himself with the statement, and does he agree that he has lost the battle in cabinet for vitally needed funds to develop this country, create legitimate careers and jobs for young Canadians, and reverse the government's dismal economic record?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, I am glad to see that support for making research and development and industrial development generally a priority of government is a matter which transcends party boundaries, and I hope we will see this continuing in the months to come since encouragement of research and development is a matter of priority with this government.

Despite fiscal constraints, I think we will see confirmed practical ways of carrying out that priority in a way that means jobs, innovation and development for Canadian industry.

Mr. Gilchrist: Madam Speaker, in spite of such lofty rhetoric, the minister knows very well that if we do not begin massive programs of research and development, more jobs will be lost to foreigners. The Japanese, through their high technology, have already replaced the Swiss as watchmakers to the world and they have taken over hundreds of automotive jobs in the minister's own riding. Will the minister undertake to remind the Minister of Finance that the government's commitment—and I underscore the word "commitment"—is to increase its investment in research to 1.5 per cent of the gross national product by 1985, not decrease it. This is too vital an area for another Liberal broken promise.

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, I do not think there is time in this question period for me to detail the long record of Conservative broken promises—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Tell us about the interest rates.

An hon. Member: When did you resign, Herb?

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, I do not have to remind the Minister of Finance about the importance of support for research and development. He shares the view that I and all of us on this side of the House share, and which I hope members on the other side share as well, regarding the importance of this matter and of government leadership in this area.