

Supply

productive, retraining and literacy program that is national and will underpin an appropriate R and D economy.

We have heard resolutions like this many times. We have heard it from all sides of the House. There is not a person in this place who has not given a speech that we must do more in R and D or our future is at stake.

If we do not stop "b.s." ing the Canadian people and really do something to enhance that, then it will not be a question of the future of the nation at stake. I suspect that politicians will be burned at the stake.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I do not think the hon. member is at a loss for words. He might choose them a little more carefully. Question and comments. The hon. minister.

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Madam Speaker, I hope my hon. colleague will forgive a somewhat personal remark. I think I liked his comments better when he was a professor of biology. I have a feeling that my hon. colleague implies in his comments that the Government of Canada should be the one to spend all the extra money we need to bring this up to some figure like 2.5 GERD over GNP.

My colleague knows that that is neither feasible nor responsible. I thought he was quite good when he talked about industrial research and how we needed to upgrade our resource industries. He is correct. There is no question that we need them to be more value-added than they are now, and that is why we are laying the plans to try and tackle some of the issues that my hon. colleague spoke about. We must consult with the various sectors, and that is what we are trying to do.

It is simply not good enough to say that it is up to the Government of Canada to respond to some national target when all the actors have to try and reach that particular target. We have done quite well. In terms of the granting councils, we have maintained the matching grant policy. Their funding for next year in terms of per cent increase is probably larger than any other program in the Government of Canada. It is 8.6 per cent.

I do wish they would not continue to kind of raise the flag of despair. We are making progress. We are at last beginning to understand what the problems are, and my hon. colleague referred to some of those. After hearing how he understands where we have to go as a country, I am somewhat distressed that he would then come back on the sort of GERD-GNP ratio as having a particular significance. I do not think it does and I think he knows in his heart that that is not the issue as such. It is much broader than that.

We have heard again about the matching grant policy. We said over and over again, Madam Speaker, that we know the matching grant policy finishes in the following year and we will make sure that we take care of that issue when the time is correct.

Mr. McCurdy: Madam Speaker, did I sense that you were disturbed by the use of the term "b.s."? You have just heard an example of it. It is called basic simplicities. We heard this from the minister.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): As I said, the hon. member is really never at a loss for words.

Mr. McCurdy: As I said, it is always a pleasure to engage in debate with the Minister for Science but I did not mean to nor do I imply or support the thesis that government is the only one responsible for funding research. Industry must do better. But the government must take some responsibility for those things that it has done which, in my view, do not enhance industry's contribution to research and development.

One of the things the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology notes is the fact that part of our problem in terms of industrial research and development is that we have a branch plant economy in which foreign owned companies just simply do not do research and development.

We have entered into a free trade deal that limits our efforts with respect to foreign acquisitions of those industries that do become research and development intensive, often as a result of government investment. That was the case with Connaught and with Lumonics. There is a leadership role that the government can undertake which can enhance industrial R and D without itself being directly responsible for funding that research."