

These comparisons show that in the Prime Minister's own words we are still very much at the junior *b* level despite all the claims by the Prime Minister and the government to the contrary.

All of us in this place know or should know that research and development are crucial not only to our economic well-being but also to the development of solutions to some of our most pressing environmental problems. Canada and indeed the world are in desperate need of new technologies to combat the despoiling of our planet. Governments should be looking for ways to stimulate and encourage the development of these new technologies, not retreating in the face of a global challenge.

I believe we must reverse this disturbing trend. I believe if members on all sides of this House offer their support for the motion we have put forward, we will have accomplished a very positive step in that direction.

We have to do what all students in this country know is necessary in order to graduate and move ahead. We have again to start doing our homework. We have again to start putting our efforts into producing more and better technologies which will put us in the forefront of global development, and not allow ourselves to become a technological backwater.

That is why we are urging every member of this House to support this motion. After all, it includes the Prime Minister's own words as he said and as our motion says:

Research and Development and the resulting innovation are the life blood of a successful economy and country.

That is why I say in concluding my remarks and opening the debate on this motion: let us join together in support of it. Let us help Canada succeed. Let us help Canada graduate and move ahead to become a more innovative and competitive economy. We need this for ourselves. We need this for our children. We need this for the future of our country.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We are discussing today the Business of Supply, the principal financial business of the Government of Canada. The government is responsible to this House of Commons. It has an obligation to maintain the confidence of this House. It is introducing two bills later

Supply

today, based on the debate in part that will take place today.

I find it frankly appalling, a complete indication of Tory arrogance, and an abuse of the practices of this House that during the speech of the Leader of the Opposition at the opening of this debate there was not a single member of the cabinet present in this House. There are 39 members of cabinet who sit in this House and one of them walked in one minute before the end of that speech. I object vigorously to this disgraceful contempt of Parliament.

• (1330)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands is quite aware of the rules of this House. Making a point of order to say precisely whether a person is or is not in the House is not the way things are done here, and he knows it quite well.

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Madam Speaker, I would want my hon. colleagues on the other side of the House to know that I sat enthralled in the lobby listening to the speech of the Leader of the Opposition. I saw once again the difficulty we continue to have in terms of this subject and certainly some members of the opposition. It is easy to raise these spectres about things that probably will never happen.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition talk about the matching grants policy and what a dreadful thing this was going to be, that millions and millions of dollars would be lopped off the budget for the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the Medical Research Council and the other things. That makes a big assumption that the matching grant policy will not be continued or, what may be even more likely, would be replaced by a policy that was even more beneficial to the universities than the one we have now.

It is not a plea for a different kind of policy. It is not a plea for continuation of the thrust. It is a comment that this is going to disappear. Therefore all the scientists and the universities in Canada should be quite upset because this government has made decisions.

I could say that same with respect to the comments about the National Research Council. This government has every intention of ensuring that the National Research Council is a major contributor to science and technology in the years ahead. We have every intention of ensuring that the National Research Council will be