

It must be understood that, as long as that investigation is going on, the concerns of the Auditor General will not have been fully resolved. As long as those concerns still exist with the Auditor General, they exist with me.

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### NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

#### APPOINTMENT OF TASK FORCE TO REVIEW PROGRAM CUTS

**Mr. David Berger (Laurier):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Science and Technology. The Minister has announced that he will be appointing a committee to review the cuts at the National Research Council which he himself told the Council to make.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Unbelievable.

**Mr. Berger:** He is saying that he does not like their judgment, that he does not trust the members of the Council. Why is the Minister questioning the judgment of the members of a Council which he himself has undermined with his own ill-advised cuts?

**Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology):** Mr. Speaker, this morning I announced the formation of a three-person task group which will examine the reallocations of the Council's resources, to ensure that programs which would have a significant impact on public health and safety and are consistent with Government priorities are not cut.

**Mr. Berger:** You have a Council. That's its job.

[Translation]

#### MINISTER'S POSITION

**Mr. David Berger (Laurier):** Mr. Speaker, this amounts to a form of trusteeship that is absolutely unconscionable and unacceptable. The Minister also says he is amazed that members of the NRC continue to sit after their mandate has expired, when he should be thanking them for their dedication to the people of Canada. I want to ask him: Does he think the NRC should close its doors until the Minister wakes up and gets around to his appointments? Is that what he has against the NRC?

[English]

**Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology):** Mr. Speaker, for the last two months the Hon. Member has insisted that I should be responsible for everything the Council does. The Council is not some kind of a private club.

**Mr. Berger:** You're right. It's not a private club.

### Oral Questions

**Mr. Oberle:** From time to time Governments establish certain priorities which the Council has historically consistently respected and taken into account in the allocation of public resources and the formation of programs. That is what has been and is presently happening. The task group which I have announced will ensure that I and Members of the House will understand the rationale which was behind the so-called cuts.

**Mr. Berger:** You had committee hearings. You're ignoring the committee hearings.

**Mr. Oberle:** It will also ensure that the Council understands the new priority which the Government has established in line with its national strategy.

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### PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

#### INDUSTRY'S PROFITABILITY

**Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The report of the Eastman Commission said in part, "that profitability in the pharmaceutical industry in Canada is relatively high and has remained so over the entire period from 1968 to 1982. The profitability of pharmaceuticals clearly exceeds that for all manufacturing industries".

In view of that, what rational explanation can there be for giving companies which are already at the highest rate of profitability the monopoly protection which they have demanded and to which the Minister has cravenly agreed?

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I have just announced \$100 million of investment in new research and development as a result of our plans.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Andre:** That figure will reach \$1 billion by the end of this decade. I find it passing strange that, on the same day that that Party suggests it wants more taxpayers' money spent on research in such things as radio astronomy, it totally objects to the creation of 3,000 research jobs through the measure we are introducing which will not impact on consumers in any detrimental fashion.

**Mr. Young:** Prove it.

**Mr. Orlikow:** Mr. Speaker, the \$150 million the Minister is talking about is one-fifteenth of what they promised.

#### ACCOUNTING FIRM'S FORECAST OF DRUG PRICES

**Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, Coopers & Lybrand, one of the biggest chartered accountant companies in Canada, has estimated that by 1995 Canadians will be paying \$650 million more per year for prescription