

*Government Orders*

had developed a pool of expertise in the course of the war, attracting scientists of considerable repute and calibre to Canada, to move here and to work in this country. Indeed, it continued to do that throughout the years until now. Now we find a government that seems to be bent on destroying this institution, depriving it of the opportunity to attract talented and capable scientists.

The cuts are going on there and the people are no longer coming. The difficulty that I keep hearing about from the scientific community—I have been in touch with them for some time and they are very, very concerned about this—is that once you start breaking up an institution like that and people start leaving, it is a very difficult trend to reverse. That is the message I keep getting.

In answer to my friend from Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, I am afraid that we are going to lose these people from the National Research Council. Once they start going, they are going to keep going. The numbers are dropping off because of the cuts and the demoralization. The institution is in a very precarious state at this time, thanks to the efforts of the government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** There is only one minute left for a short question or comment. That is about all I can allow the hon. member for Willowdale.

**Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale):** Mr. Speaker, members of the industry, science and technology committee had the opportunity to visit the NRC a short while ago. We met some of the top people there. Their ranks were much thinner than they had been previously because of the major cuts at the top and throughout the NRC. When we asked these people specific questions about the state of research and development in Canada, they were afraid to answer straightforward questions. In my own mind, I was criticizing these people. I want to apologize to them.

• (1410)

**Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)):** Mr. Speaker, I rise as a Minister of State for Industry, Science, and Technology to speak to this opposition motion today.

I have had the chance to listen to a great many of the speeches by hon. members opposite, as well quite factual and helpful speeches by hon. members on this side. I want to make a preliminary comment and then develop further the government's position on not just the National Research Council, but on science and technology funding generally.

I listened carefully this morning until noon and then came back later to listen to more of this debate. Not once did I hear anything from the opposition anything about links to the private sector. Its whole discussion of science and technology reminded me a bit of a defence of a cultural institution. Science and technology, according to the opposition, should go on in universities and government laboratories. Not a word do we hear about feeding and strengthening those institutions through links with the private sector and with the industrial reality of this country. It is a fundamental flaw in everything I have heard from hon. members opposite today. They do not feed the institutions that we have for research and government and university with linkages to the private sector. They do not talk nor care about that. They almost look upon science and technology as a cultural artefact which exists without any linkages to the real world or to the private sector.

**Mr. Milliken:** Nonsense.

**Mr. Hockin:** Hon. members opposite say this is nonsense. It certainly is nonsense but this is what they are saying by neglecting to talk about the links to the private sector. The problem with their approach is they want us to maintain these institutions almost in an incarcerated way, cut off from the lifeblood of what will make them dynamic and strong which is to link them with the real world, industrial research and the private sector.

The government has done a great deal to make sure that happens. Members opposite find this most difficult to agree with, but something we have tried to do is to make them stronger in their linkages with the private sector and the industrial community that is outside of universities and government.

I want to make comments in three different directions. I want to talk about this linkage with the private sector and basic research. I also want to give some examples of how this new approach of linking industrial research that is done in government and universities more with the