

Mrs. Maheu: If the amounts for education are not being cut but increased, how come all the provinces are screaming that they are being cut?

People like to talk about the debt with which the country is burdened. Is it not true that the United States probably has a larger per capita debt than ours?

Mr. Duhamel: At the federal level, yes.

Mrs. Maheu: At the federal level, they do not shout about it! I have nothing more to add, except that it is easy to play with words. We should look at the actual figures.

[English]

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy—Royal): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some comments with reference to the hon. member's position and remind her of something for her response. It is pretty obvious from the amount of money that has been spent on science and technology, that the government considers it to be a cornerstone of Canada's economic policy, as has been pointed out by the minister.

In referring to New Brunswick, specifically, I think it is important to recognize that we all have a responsibility to research and development. Despite the tremendous effort of the federal government, we have to ensure that others are involved in the process. The federal government cannot do this alone. We must rely on industry, provincial governments, and the universities to do their part.

I want to remind the hon. member that, indeed, the federal government has devoted a substantial amount of money to research and development. In comparison to other countries, it is estimated that more than \$500 million, or about 18 per cent of our total federal research and development expenditures, will be spent by the country, as compared with 17 per cent for France; 17 per cent for the Netherlands; and right down to the United States where it is a miserly 4 per cent. I think it is important that the hon. member understand that. Perhaps she might like to reassess the situation in view of these very significant figures that are available to us.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ferland): I will allow the hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville (Mrs. Maheu) to give a short answer, because her time is not up.

Supply

[English]

Mrs. Maheu: Mr. Speaker, I will try to answer as quickly as possible.

I am not quite sure where the hon. member obtained his figures. Gross research and development expenditures as percentage of GDP is 1.32 per cent. We are the lowest ranking of countries like the U.S., Germany, France, Sweden, the U.K., the Netherlands, and Japan. For government funded R and D for gross national product, we are the second lowest of all of these countries. For government performed R and D, we are in the middle. For industry funded, we are the lowest again. For higher education, we are the second lowest. I cannot understand from where the hon. member is getting his figures, but I think perhaps they should be modified.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ferland): I am sorry, but the period for questions and comments is now over. The hon. member for St. Boniface.

[English]

Mr. Hopkins: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In order to put some balance into this debate, I wonder if the Speaker would arrange to recognize people from both sides of the House, instead of just those on the government benches, for questions and comments.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ferland): Sorry. I think the time is fairly well divided between both sides of the House. The hon. member for St. Boniface.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, we are debating an extremely important issue. I hope the Opposition members present in this House are discussing with rather than insulting each other. I also hope that the Canadian people, particularly parents of young and not so young university and college students, are listening to this debate. My colleagues opposite could perhaps let me explain my ideas.

As you know, the Royal Society of Canada is having a conference today in Ottawa, which is dedicated to the growing interest in science in Canada.