

*Space Agency*

gists is clear. The cuts in post-secondary education and in general university research certainly is not a contribution to ensuring that there will be the appropriate personnel to ensure that the space agency will be successful. We have to be concerned about the considerable deterioration and erosion of morale in the scientific community, particularly in government laboratories.

I do not choose now as the time to reflect upon the correctness or otherwise of decisions that have been made with respect of the location of the space agency because, as you know, Mr. Speaker, my Party supported the location in the Montreal area. However, parenthetically, the number of jobs that will be produced by the location of the space agency itself in any area has been exaggerated to a point of communicating a message to almost everyone that huge numbers of jobs will be produced in any location where the space agency is located. Let us put that impression to rest.

On a number of occasions we have attempted to ascertain what were the considerations that went into the decision to establish the space agency in the location in which the Government has decided. Such questions were posed as, what are the relative costs in this location as compared to other locations? What will be the additional operating costs in one location versus another location? How many scientists will be lost to the project because of relocation?

If we are going to ensure that our scientists are completely devoted to a program such as the space program, or any other program, it is important to recognize that there has to be reasonable consultation. Regrettably, it turns out that a survey taken of scientists associated with the space program indicated that a number of our top scientists are refusing to go for a number of reasons. For example, the absence of commutability from Ottawa to elsewhere, long establishment here, and what they see as being an inconvenience in the working conditions, and so on. There are 50 per cent in association with the space program who are saying that they will refuse to go. This is not a discussion of the merits of their point of view. However, it certainly does call attention to the utter failure of Government to provide reasonable evidence that the decision it took was a reasonable decision to have been taken, and evidence

that there had been reasonable consultation with scientists to ensure that it would work.

It is not going to work if we lose scientists to the United States. They say that in the circumstances once they leave, they will leave the country. That is certainly not a contribution to the enhancement of our efforts in space research, space technology or science in general.

• (1520)

We support this legislation and do not intend to impede its passage. It is good legislation with respect to the specific matter, and we look forward to the successes that it will motivate in Canadian laboratories in universities and industry.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, in concluding, I would like to formulate a wish for the Hon. Member. I say a wish, because I wouldn't want to force a promise on him. We all know that promises— In any case, my wish is certainly the wish of a large part of Canada's scientific community. It is that this Government should stop looking at space and come down to earth long enough to realize that here in Canada there is an urgent need for investing more in the future and enabling researchers and future generations of researchers to continue their work. If the Government keeps cutting transfer payments to the provinces for post-secondary education and forcing the National Research Council to do more with less, we will never make it.

[*English*]

It is important to see the space program within the context of the over-all scientific research and development policy in Canada. We look forward to signals from the Government that it will address all of those shortcomings that must be addressed if Canada is to mount to a position higher than it has heretofore occupied in the world of research and development, and therefore in economic competitiveness in the world.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Suzanne Duplessis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Science and Technology)):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to rise in the debate on Bill C-16 to establish the Canadian Space Agency.

Allow me to refer to Clause 4: