

national pride that it became a source of national disunity.

I say this cautiously. As a representative of the national capital region, I do not want to be seen to be engaging in the same kind of parochial politics that gave rise to the problem in the first place. In 1916, when Canada spent all that money to put an observatory on the top of a mountain in Victoria, British Columbia, when hardly anybody lived out there, it did it for one reason. That was the place in Canada where the science of observation was best served. It was not because there were great electoral results to be earned by doing it.

When Canada makes a commitment to do something like the space agency, the issue should be this. Where can the interests of science be best served? I think that the decision-making process on items like the Canadian Space Agency's location should not be done at the political level, but done much as we administer the National Centres of Excellence program or the granting councils, let us have the scientists concerned do it on the basis of what is in the best interests of science.

• (1040)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Duplessis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Science and Technology)): Mr. Speaker, since the hon. member wondered where this government is taking us, I would like to inform him that our government's goal is to put this country on the road to prosperity. We want Canada to be a first-class country by the year 2000.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recall, for the hon. member's benefit, some policies that have been fundamental to the government's purpose, and not necessarily in terms of dollars and cents. We must not forget, Mr. Speaker, that we took these steps in order to have a country that is able to adjust more readily. I may therefore remind the hon. member that we established a science and technology policy for Canada, under which each province was asked to do its share to help workers and students adjust and make them better trained so that they can meet industry needs. We had the conference on

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innovation in Toronto, where Canadian industries were asked to upgrade the quality of their products. They were asked to increase productivity and enhance the value of their products. They were also asked to incorporate advanced technologies in their processes.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to mention, for the hon. member's benefit, a series of measures that were taken to make our country more flexible. We set up InnovAction and Strategic Technologies. We identified the areas in which Canada could excel, such as artificial intelligence, biomaterials and telecommunications. For the universities, we set up a program called Matching Grants, because we found that although the research being done in the universities was excellent, often researchers were cut off from what was going on in the rest of the country. Through the Matching Grants Program, industry will do a lot more research and it will need more and more of the type of research being done by these very competent people. And in the end, Mr. Speaker, we will get students that are far better trained to respond to the needs of industry.

We also developed the well-known Network of Centres of Excellence Program which promotes basic research across the country. This is a tremendous program, Mr. Speaker, because it allows universities, participating industries and our various research councils—especially the National Research Council of Canada which is a participant in 10 proposals—to do research and make their findings known across the country, thus enabling other researchers to use the information to best advantage.

To increase substantially the number of researchers in this country by the year 2000 and to enable our country to meet this objective, we set up the Canada Scholarships Program, which is intended to encourage more young people to continue their education and go on to university, where we hope they will want to continue their studies and go on to become better researchers.

Mr. Speaker, I have the following question for the hon. member: regarding the National Research Council and preparations for the five-year plan, I wonder why he cannot understand that the council executive might want