

### *Supply*

information age, but this government has not made efforts to do this.

The importance of preparing every region for the new information age becomes clear when one considers that new information services will lead to increased productivity and market competitiveness.

With the massive amounts of information being generated world-wide each day and with increasing global integration, it is essential for all business services, traditional and innovative, to adopt telematic management processes. Once the business sector has been served, firms will extend their services to households which is still a major untapped market as a group.

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The peripheral regions of our country, the provinces east of Quebec and west of Ontario, will benefit greatly from an integration of telecommunications firms in the regional planning process. The number of jobs created will help to alleviate unemployment, and these jobs will be more creative and more justified than the make work jobs of many existing programs.

Further, effective information systems will increase the over-all productivity of society and decrease the cost of services. For example, consumer information services will promote productivity gains in health care and educational sectors.

What is necessary now is for the government to provide leadership to help regions develop local science and technology bases, which will then lead to a much needed diversification of local economies. The regions will then be relieved of their overdependence on cyclical research based industries.

Applied research should be focused on development and the application of technology which is appropriate to economic development in each of the regions. The government could encourage private sector research through grant programs, contract based support and investment incentive programs. There would thus be an alleviation of the current imbalance caused by the emphasis on central Canadian models which are sometimes inappropriate to other regions.

This government proved its lack of concern for regional development when it cancelled the Unsolicited Proposals Program. I would like the Minister for Science to comment on that and to defend his position on why he cancelled it.

Witnesses before the Standing Committee on Science and Technology have told us that that program was very important because it provided a kind of contract based funding bridge that is vitally important to many early stage technology companies.

This government must provide flexible support for science and technology and customize its funding programs so that developing needs of a given sector in a given region can be met. The focus on central Canada is unsuitable. It will lead to the perpetuation of the tailoring of support programs to that part of the country. As I have pointed out previously, programs which are good for central Canada are often not appropriate for the regions.

This government must ensure that the regions will be able to play vital roles in the high tech era so that all regions of Canada will become more productive, as this is necessary to keep Canada competitive on the international scene.

In summary, I would like to challenge the government to come forward soon with a coherent and comprehensive science policy, which is still lacking; a policy that will define clearly the commitment and the action that it will take for basic and applied research and a policy that will take into account and have the sensitivity to consider all regions of our country. Last but not least, that policy must include a policy on education and training, for without the intellect that we need in science and technology we cannot progress.

I challenge the government to come forward soon with a coherent and comprehensive science policy if we are to compete in the global economy.

**Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science):** Madam Speaker, I would like to respond to some of the comments that my colleague has made, particularly with respect to information and the information technologies.

There is no question that he is absolutely right when he talks about how information and information transmission are going to be so critical to the country. That is why I would like to tell him about the National Research Council network, an across Canada network that is now