

*Government Orders*

So when the hon. member seems to be referring to the fact that our government—You always seem to be saying that we do nothing, that we do not want to have a competitive country. I just started after my colleague's speech to explain what the government was doing and how it went about it and why it all fits into a total picture. It is not just one thing we are doing.

So I must tell the hon. member that I was just explaining everything we had set up, the science and technology policy throughout the country, so that all the provinces in Canada train students and skilled workers to meet the new requirements of high-tech industries, because more and more, industries will be modernized and need this kind of personnel. So I had got to telling you about what we are doing for universities and also for basic research. I was talking about the centres of excellence that will enable us, Mr. Speaker, to continue doing first-class research and basic research, by establishing networks and choosing niches to make Canada a world leader in this field.

Also, another member earlier suggested, when presenting petitions, that the GST was wrong. But behind this initiative, the GST proposal, there is of course the need to reduce the deficit. Since we have to pay interest on the debt to the tune of \$39 billion a year, can you imagine what we could do for research or social programs if we did not have to pay that kind of money each year? This is really disturbing. Also, under the over all plan which calls for efforts to be made to turn Canada into a first-rate country with a competitive industry, it should be noted that by changing the tax from the 13.5 per cent levied on manufactured goods produced here in Canada, we will end up being competitive and have a chance—Canadians will have a chance to buy Canadian products, because they will be comparable to foreign imports.

There is also the involvement of universities. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was not here earlier, or he would have known that all this is part of the plan. All our policies are developed and designed, to make our economy more flexible so people can adjust. We called upon industries and universities. We introduced matching funding under which industries now can use top-notch scientists that are doing research within universities. Matching funding has a two fold benefit because Students can now be trained to really meet the needs of industry.

We are also keeping high priority on large projects such as the Space Agency, the RADARSAT program, and our involvement in the space platform project.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, as I answered briefly to the first question put by the hon. member, there has been no cuts to the NRC. The five year plan is being prepared, and this is something important for the future, Mr. Speaker. The Council is now reviewing all areas of research currently done in-house, Mr. Speaker, and they are looking at new avenues that could be extremely interesting.

• (1230)

[*English*]

**Mr. Manley:** Mr. Speaker, I am mystified by the parliamentary secretary's statement that there have not been cuts. From 1984-85, when this government came into office, the budget has been reduced for the NRC from \$505 million down to, in the coming fiscal year, \$433 million, with the space agency included. So there has been an absolute reduction.

The parliamentary secretary has made a very good case, as my colleague said, for the National Research Council. Having made that case, does she and the government agree with the views of the president of the National Research Council that the NRC should limit its involvement in basic research to that required to maintain a minimal scientific insurance policy for the nation? And does she agree that the NRC should pursue a policy of privatization and divestiture as indicated by the president of the NRC?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Suzanne Duplessis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Science and Technology)):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my honorable colleague for asking that question. I must point out to him that it is not the intent of this government to have the National Research Council of Canada privatize its staff. In our view, it is important to keep a strong National Research Council really responsive to the needs and expectations of Canadian scientists and industries, and that is one of our priorities.

[*English*]

**Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the NDP to support the motion made by the member for Ottawa South. We also would like to join in condemning the government for the lack of