

*Government Orders*

We help attract, train and retain researchers, technologists and technicians who will begin to provide a critical mass of expertise in science and technology.

Merck Frosst has contributed substantially to making the Montreal area a world-class centre of excellence. Now the company would like to do the same thing for British Columbia.

In acknowledging the important role that Merck Frosst will assume in helping to develop a healthy R and D sector in B.C., I would also like to pay tribute to a man whose vision has been instrumental in encouraging the company to invest on the west coast.

David Strangway, president of the University of British Columbia, has been untiring in his efforts to solicit R and D investment for his university.

Last January when the Government of Canada announced its intention to reform patent protection in order to attract new investment, Mr. Strangway contacted virtually every pharmaceutical company in Canada to seek research commitments.

Merck Frosst responded with a commitment of \$15 million over five years. This represents about a quarter of Merck Frosst spending in support of research outside the company. The R and D contracted outside the company is in addition to an in-house research budget of between \$35 million and \$40 million a year.

The investment will be directed primarily to research and development in genetic disorders and will build upon Vancouver's acknowledged strength as a research centre in this field.

Researchers at the University of British Columbia in the biomedical research centre of Vancouver are among the 23 principal investigators working in 12 different universities in research facilities across the country as part of the Canadian genetic disease network.

This is one of the research networks sponsored under the Government of Canada's \$240 million network of centres of excellence program. It has already announced remarkable breakthroughs in isolating the genetic defects responsible for cystic fibrosis, muscular dystrophy and myotonic dystrophy.

The work of the generic diseases network has advanced the search for cures for these crippling diseases, and scientists in Vancouver, such as Dr. Michael Hayden, will continue to explore new trails in genetic research.

By the way, Dr. Hayden's name has been brought forward as the eminent researcher who will operate the proposed new facility that will grow from the Merck Frosst investment. The facility will likely create 10 new faculty positions at UBC.

These faculty positions represent a tremendous opportunity for researchers in Canada who want to become involved in leading-edge R and D in one of the most exciting areas of science and technology. British Columbia, well-known for its forest and mineral wealth, is well on the way to becoming a world-renowned centre for genetics research.

What will it take for Merck Frosst to go through with its proposal to invest \$15 million in genetics research in British Columbia? Most important, Merck Frosst requires the added patent protection that is contained in this bill before us today if it is to go ahead with its investment proposal.

I know that hon. members from both sides of this House support the principle of increased R and D. I know that hon. members from every region of the country will applaud a decision that will help add the University of British Columbia to the growing list of Canadian centres of excellence in pharmaceuticals research and development.

I would ask all of hon. members to help make sure that this project goes through. How can they help?

By providing adequate patent protection so that the company that is willing to make these costly investments in R and D will be able to reap the benefits through patent protection that lasts for a full 20-year term.

The legislation before us means new opportunities for researchers across Canada. It means the beginning of a new world class research facility at the University of British Columbia. It means more research investment that will help create balance among the regions of Canada in the effort of all provinces to retool their economies for the demands of the information age.