

country, all payload specialists, one of whom, it is worth noting, is a woman. Canada will participate in the U.S. space station at a cost of about \$800 million over 15 years.

Many Canadians would welcome that development provided they can be assured, and there are still some concerns, of the use of such a program, provided that it is non-military and provided that the cost of Canada's \$800 million worth of participation is not done at the expense of other research and development.

As much as I join the Minister in celebrating Canada's 25 years in space, I would be remiss if I did not remind the House, and indeed the Minister, as well as Canadians, that this Government had committed itself to increased R and D spending to 2.5 per cent of GNP in line with other major industrial nations. I know the Minister would like to see that happen. That was the commitment three years ago. The reality is an expenditure of roughly 1.3 per cent.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) in his book *Where I Stand* committed himself to an expenditure increase of roughly 20 per cent in NRC. The reality is that there has been a reduction of nearly \$400 million or a cumulative drop of 23 per cent. He promised an increase and we developed a drop of 23 per cent. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) in his Budget of February, 1986, announced an increase of \$1 billion to federal granting agencies. The reality is that there will be a \$335 million drop in base budgets of those same granting agencies.

Yes, Canada does have a proud tradition, Canada does have 25 years in space of which it can be proud and which it should celebrate. But those accomplishments were not only a reflection of the genius, the hard work and the dedication of the technicians and scientists of this country, they were a reflection of the commitment of the governments during those 25 years to see progress in Canada. That commitment can only continue, and the next 25 years can only be as bright when the Government of Canada continues the kind of financial commitment necessary for R and D in this country.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, I was a graduate student in the United States when the first satellite, Sputnik, was launched into space. It was traumatic for the nations of the west at the time, but as scientists we saw in the event the beginning of a new era for science. Subsequent developments fulfilled that hope. Working as a graduate student, it was with pride that I learned that 25 years ago my country, Canada, became the third country to orbit a satellite, Alouette I, thus establishing Canadian leadership in the peaceful exploitation of space.

• (1520)

It is meet that it has been through the use of extraterrestrial space that we have been able to enhance communications among our people, across the vast terrestrial space of our land, and thus foster a nation more united.

Petitions

I wish to join the Minister in paying homage to the scientists and engineers who have, by their creativity, skill and knowledge, placed Canada among the front-ranks in the development of first-class space technology. It is technology that is not limited only to the exploitation of space but serves as well to enhancing the technological basis for industry as well as improving the lives of our citizens.

As we celebrate the twenty-fifth Anniversary of Alouette I, Canada has committed itself to the intensification of its efforts in space with its new \$2 billion space program. In Radarsat we will be provided with extraterrestrial eyes to help us in managing our resources. In MSAT we will extend again our communications capacity, and in the development of the mobile servicing system we will expand our knowledge of and ability to exploit space.

As a scientist, I appreciate the significance of our involvement in space, but I also, as a scientist and as a citizen, must express my concerns. First, Canada must not allow its collaboration in space to become collaboration in advancing the destabilizing military policies of the United States resperented by the star wars initiative. We should commit ourselves to the more noble effort of establishing in space the monitoring systems that will provide confidence for the world in the security of future disarmament agreements.

Second, our research effort in space must not distort or allow us to forget our scientific efforts in other fields. As the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) has noted, Canada remains minor league in its science effort and our space agency alone will not bring our general performance to the major league level.

While we are preoccupied with free trade as the basis for future industrial and economic development for Canada, we have shown virtually no commitment to the real basis for future growth, the expansion of knowledge. It is there, not elsewhere, that Canada's future lies.

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PETITIONS

EXIT VISAS FOR THE KAGAN FAMILY

Mr. Peter Peterson (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present a duly certified petition from a number of constituents in my riding of Hamilton West and from other concerned citizens of the Province of Ontario. The petitioners have expressed serious concern that the Soviet Government has consistently refused over the past 10 years to grant exit visas to the Kagan family who are forced to reside under this socialist regime.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to protest the constant refusal of the Soviet Government to grant exit visas, and demand that our Government continue its efforts to secure the Kagans release.