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qualified women and men we need to drive the remarkable technological revolution forward.

It is the people who invent, innovate, produce, market, manage, and generate the wealth to sustain our standard of living and improve upon our quality of life. Research and development just does not happen. You have got to have people to make it happen.

We recognize, as a government, the training of our researchers, scientists, and engineers will underpin everything we do in science and technology. This is obviously where our greatest challenge exists.

Recent studies, including those done by our Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, indicate that Canada faces a crisis situation with a shortage of highly skilled and qualified scientists and engineers. We must recognize that to a great extent it is a problem of demographics. Both universities and industries have to replace their highly qualified personnel who are nearing the age of retirement. Unfortunately, the numbers needed to replace the researchers, engineers and professors, just simply are not there. At least that is the case in this country.

Many people would not recognize that we are second only to the United States in the number of post-secondary graduates as a percentage of the workforce. However, notwithstanding that, we do have a low rate of scientists and engineers. The proportion of students entering science and engineering has remained relatively constant at 20 per cent over the past decade. The Economic Council of Canada, among others, has indicated that the technological content of all jobs will increase. We are going to need a higher percentage of scientists and engineers in the workforce.

As the minister has indicated, as a government we do not want to waste our time pointing a finger at who is responsible. We are committed to resolving the problem. We want to build a world class supply of highly qualified personnel. That is what this is all about. We are committed to valuing scientific and engineering achievements and to providing appropriate rewards and recognitions to contributions in these fields.

It is a fact, a sad fact, perhaps, but nonetheless a fact, that the remuneration or rewards for science and technology and the engineering professions have never been on a par with of the other professions such as, the legal or medical professions. As a society, we must bear a

responsibility for that and we must act now to change it. The key is to reach our young people, the young women and men in our elementary and high schools whom we will search out. We will do what we can to encourage them to become aware of how science and technology affects their lives. We need to get them excited about science and technology and we need to encourage them to pursue the wide range of career opportunities in these fields.

I am proud to say today that the government is playing a leadership role in that fashion. It is a leadership role witnessed through a number of initiatives and the Canada Scholarships Program is just one excellent example. It is about recognizing, rewarding and encouraging some of the finest young women and men—the brightest minds—we have in Canada.

I remind the House of when the Prime Minister launched the Canada Scholarships Program two years ago. He spoke about these bright minds and the commitment of our government to ensuring that the talents of these young Canadians would be appropriately rewarded and recognized.

Our objectives for the program were twofold. Not only did we want to encourage more of our top students, particularly women to pursue their studies in these critical fields of sciences and engineering, but we wanted to promote further the development of a highly qualified work force—our most important natural resource which is so necessary for strengthening Canada's future economic competitiveness.

Two years later, I am pleased to advise that the success of the program has far exceeded the government's greatest expectations. Those responsible for promoting and maintaining the program, including the many groups and institutions that have contributed so much time to its administration, should be justifiably proud. Clearly, those most responsible for the success of the program have been the scholars themselves, the talented and dedicated women and men from across the country. I believe these young people deserve our congratulations.

Last October the Minister for Science, in conjunction with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, launched National Universities Week with the announcement of 3,400 Canada Scholarship winners for this current academic year. Since that time, the federal government has collaborated with individual universities