

CANADA MUST COMPETE

INTRODUCTION

Science and technology must be a priority! Canadian jobs depend upon greater investment in research and development. It's our future!

This is the central message impressed upon members of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, Regional and Northern Development during the course of the Committee's examination into science and technology in Canada. It is a message which must be recognized and understood by all Canadians.

Science and technology are increasingly important in our lives. Whether it is at home, in the office, in the fields or on the assembly lines, the revolutionary changes brought about by research and development have impacted upon everybody's lives. The pace of change has been remarkable throughout this century and as the next century approaches it is accelerating. Canadians must face the challenges brought about by these transformations. Canadians must recognize the central importance of science and technology in making their country competitive in the global marketplace.

Canada is a trading nation. Our standard of living depends directly on our ability to trade competitively in world markets. Traditionally, Canada has relied for its wealth upon its abundant supply of natural resources and a strong manufacturing sector. However, these are no longer sufficient to guarantee a strong position in an increasingly knowledge-based global economy. Many of our traditional resource products are being replaced by material substitutes or are meeting stiff competition from all nations. In the manufacturing sector, the rapid growth in the generation of value-added goods in newly industrializing nations is outstripping the ability of our producers to compete. To meet these challenges the Canadian economy will have to become more productive. This will require more innovation in the economy through the development of new products, improved production technologies, and innovative management techniques. In order to remain competitive, we must become more efficient at producing not only our traditional export goods but also at developing new knowledge-based products and services and at introducing new technology into the workplace.

Science and technology are the driving forces that allow a nation to improve its competitiveness. Research and development provide Canadians with the opportunity to develop new products, services and low cost methods of production. They are also changing the nature of our work. Different types of jobs are being created that require higher levels