they are stuck with it. Joey Smallwood used to say that the benefits of being in Government are much greater than the benefits of being in Opposition. One of the benefits of being in Government is taking decisions. I call on the Government now to take the decision on the location of the space agency.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Questions and comments are now terminated. Debate. The Hon. Minister of State for Science and Technology.

**Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State (Science and Technology)):** Mr. Speaker, as you know this year Canada celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary of involvement in space. This debate this morning is most timely because critical decisions have to be made. I too want to join in expressing my appreciation to the Hon. Member for Grand Falls—White Bay—Labrador (Mr. Rompkey) for taking the initiative to move concurrence in the report which the standing committee of the House of Commons has tabled.

Let me point out how important it is that we have for the first time in Canadian history a Standing Committee on Science, Research and Technology. I thank the committee for its work.

This debate without doubt will provide us with additional information needed to take Canada forward into the 21st century and to identify the role the new frontier of space will play in this journey. I must say I did enjoy, as I always do, the intellectual gymnastics among Members of the Official Opposition, some of whom are in favour of a space agency in Montreal, while others are in favour of the space agency being in Ottawa. As usual, the Official Opposition is in favour of the people.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) announced last week that his Party will support the Montreal location and the Hon. Member in the House this morning from Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) says he is strongly in favour of an Ottawa location. As I pointed out, I will take this useful advise into consideration before announcing the location of the space agency which we think has to be in the best interests of the over-all Canadian space program.

As I said, we celebrate 25 years involvement in space. It was on September 29, 1962 when Canada positioned itself as the third nation in the world next to the United States and the Soviet Union in space on a new frontier with the launch of Alouette I, a research satellite. That was followed by a second Alouette satellite. The Alouette series was followed by the ISIS series, another research satellite and then the launch of the Anik A series early in the 1970s. In 1976 we had the Hermes satellite which really paved way for the next Anik series of satellites. There were three more, all of which were in the communications area.

We were not only the third nation to establish a presence in space but the very first to establish and position a geostationary communications satellite for commercial purposes.

The success did not end there, Mr. Speaker. As you know we assumed a certain leadership role in the development of space robotics. We built the Canadarm which was launched with such incredible success as part of the shuttle system. It is our intention to build on this technology.

We co-operated with the United States, France and the Soviet Union in the so-called SARSAT cosmos series of satellites which are intended for search and rescue. These satellites have saved literally hundreds of lives since first being deployed. Now, of course, we are developing and deploying the next Anik series, Anik E. What a proud record for a nation our size. We are also in a prominent position having earned prestige and respect as a result of our initiatives in these areas.

It was natural for us when we assumed our mandate in 1984 to build on the record of those who were far-sighted and visionary in 1962, to move Canada toward the next generation of communications facilities and move closer toward what some people call mankind's last frontier.

In May of last year we announced our comprehensive space program. We identified the challenges that lay ahead and also the opportunities. Our comprehensive space program which is the topic of the committee's report is predicated on a number of very basic principles. The first is that the program has to be designed in a way which is sensitive to Canadian needs. We in Canada have always been fascinated with the need to bridge distance and to communicate with one another. We have built communications and transportation infrastructures and we have become the best in the world in communications technology. It was for that reason that we moved into space with these technologies to keep pace with the trends and developments taking place. We assumed and maintained an important leadership role in this area.

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It is also important to practise responsible custodianship of the vast territory over which we claim sovereignty and the resources we have inherited. Here too we have used the new technologies to improve our practices. That is why we have used the Radarsat program.

The next generation of remote sensing is so important to us because it will do all of the things the Hon. Member outlined it would do. It will permit us to improve the control of our sovereignty over our resources, to have proper forecasting of weather for crops and to have ice surveillance on the oceans. Who knows, I am as visionary as my hon. friend is about what the Radarsat program and future research might develop. For instance, many people have the idea of the transparent sea, and it is hard to imagine what that would mean to the management of our ocean resources and fisheries. As well, the military implications of this are really quite exciting. All of these things must be included in a comprehensive program.

Second, like all of our science and technology initiatives, the space program had to be designed to overcome some of our historic problems. One of these historic problems is our