

debate on space policy helpful, but not as relevant as it should be. I, for one, regret that we have not begun this week, as we were told by the Government we would, to deal with the free trade accord which was made public only last Friday and which apparently the Government is still determined to sign in one week of parliamentary time from now, that is, two weeks after we adjourn on Friday.

I do want to speak about a number of the elements in this report. I commend the committee for the fact that some of its criticisms revealed it really did take issue with a number of the priorities put forward by the Government with respect to its science program, in particular, the committee's emphasis on the need for the remote sensing program, the Radarsat program, to go forward as a priority, and its criticism of the Government which is quite blunt. The committee feels that the 1986 space plan fails to strike an appropriate balance, that Radarsat should have the highest priority of the three major programs, that is, the space program and space station and communications, because Radarsat best fulfils the stated objectives of Canada's space program.

It cannot be much clearer than that, particularly as we know how to read between the lines. This was a committee which had a majority of members of the Government, yet even the government Members had grave misgivings about the degree to which we are putting all of our eggs into one basket, namely, the space station, rather than other areas of space science and research and development.

I will put this in some context by first pointing out that the Government's commitment to establish a space agency was announced in October, 1986, at the time of the Throne Speech. Second, I cannot recall the exact date when Canada made the commitment to the space station, but I believe that commitment was made during the period up until June of 1985, because that is when I ceased being the science critic for my Party, and I can recall commenting on it at that time. So we are now looking at a decision which is some three years old. Yet, a great deal has happened since that time, which I think confirms some misgivings that many people have had about the degree to which we are putting so much of our emphasis into this particular project.

We have seen since then a continuing series of cut-backs in the National Research Council made by the same Government that says "Is it not wonderful what we are doing in space?" It is kind of a bread and circus as type of approach in which the Government tells us it is going to do great things in space but at the same time it savagely attacks the National Research Council. It has totally failed to put into place a program to ensure that Canada achieves the levels of spending on research and development that the Conservatives promised during the course of the 1984 election campaign. We have seen no meaningful means of that taking place. We have seen instead a series of programs that have also had the effect of cutting back federal funding to the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council and other research councils, which have been told to go with their begging bowl and get money from

Motions

the private sector to make up for what Government is not prepared to come up with.

As I said a moment ago, the key recommendation in the report, it seems to me, is the finding of the committee that balance is lacking in terms of the Government's program. Second, what I think is key is the committee's concern about the military use of the space station and this rather ineffectual announcement that Canada will take away its chips if it finds that somehow the United States has taken the space station and used it for military purposes, as clearly the hawks in the Pentagon would like to do, despite any agreements having been made right now. Third, there is the whole question of the overrun and the degree to which that could very quickly gobble up any amount of money in Canada's space budget, and the Government's failure to come to grips squarely with that particular issue and its inadequate response in the November 27 response to the committee whose report, of course, had been tabled some six months earlier. I note that because in the next five years space station spending will take up more than 25 per cent of the budget according to the figures the Government has made public. But the 20-year commitment makes the situation look a good deal more radical than that, and the 15-year commitment to the turn of the century.

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In that period of time it is estimated that the space station will consume some \$697 million of federal funding in Canada. Radarsat is estimated to cost approximately \$236 million, according to the committee's own figures; the mobile satellite, the communications satellite program will cost \$151 million; the European Space Agency will cost \$122 million; the astronaut program will cost \$55 million; space science in general will cost an additional \$70 million on top of what is already being spent. All those figures added together total approximately \$1.3 billion which is being committed by the Government to space science over the course of the next 15 years.

What is interesting and disturbing is that the American estimates for the space station have gone completely off the rails. Where they stated it would cost \$8 billion, they are now stating it will cost \$14 billion. I suspect, after the tragic failure of the Challenger program a year or so ago, the deaths of the astronauts involved at that time, the necessity to put the space shuttle program on hold, and the delays that is having for the space program in general, that we will see further costly delays and cost overruns in the American space program.

If one takes the increase from \$8 billion to \$14 billion and applies that to Canada, we are talking about an increase in the cost of the Canadian element of the space station from \$700 million to possibly \$1.3 billion. What is instructive about that is that that is equal to the total space program that has been enunciated for the course of the next 13 or 15 years. On top of that, the carrying and operating costs for Canada's participation in the space station are estimated to be a possible \$30 million a year. That is more than is currently being spent on all