

named Mr. James Beggs as his personal emissary on the subject. I will be meeting with Mr. Beggs this week to follow up on the announcement made by the President. Our meeting will take place on Thursday and I would be delighted to report to Hon. Members what our position is, subsequent to that meeting. I suspect that a good deal of further work must be done before we decide whether we should make a very substantial investment in the project. It is interesting, and we are pursuing it.

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT SUPPORT PROJECT

Mr. Thomas Siddon (Richmond-South Delta): Mr. Speaker, the Minister points out that studies have been done. Mr. Carl Doetsch, his official in charge of the Canadian space program, has indicated that studies of the specific space station proposal in question have been ongoing for many months. Yet the Minister refused to indicate whether he has or will convey to the U.S. President and administration Canada's support for this project. Why is the Minister, on behalf of the Government of Canada and the thousands of people who might realize new and gainful employment from this project, hesitant to make a commitment on Canada's behalf now, which is what the Canadian space industry requires?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Minister of State for Economic and Regional Development and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, these matters are not quite as simple as the Hon. Member suggests. I would take from his statement that the Tory Party endorses the concept of Canadian participation in a space station project. It is roughly a \$8 billion project. I think we would be wise to ascertain what, in fact, the benefits will be to Canadian industry, how many jobs will be created, and what industrial and scientific application it would have from our point of view. These are legitimate questions for us to take a very close look at before confirming that we are on board and going to participate. I do not think the Hon. Member would expect us to write a blank cheque on a project, the feasibility of which we are still studying.

SUGGESTED ESTABLISHMENT OF CANADIAN SPACE AGENCY

Mr. Thomas Siddon (Richmond-South Delta): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that Canada has been studying this question for years, and Canadian scientists have been involved in all the major success in the U.S. space program. Bearing this in mind, it would appear that the Government is constrained by other factors—perhaps political or strategic. Will the Minister indicate the Government's undertaking to centralize Canada's support for this program by creating a Canadian space agency which would administer the contracting to over 88 Canadian companies that have already submitted firm proposals in support of this initiative? Will he ensure that the Canadian Government makes a co-ordinated effort, at no significant additional cost, to Canada, to ensure that those jobs, opportunities, and participation come to Canada?

Oral Questions

• (1420)

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Minister of State for Economic and Regional Development and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Hon. Member for Richmond-South Delta has underlined the success of the space program to date. He has pointed out that Canadian scientists have indeed made a very significant contribution to the success of many space applications in the past; the Canadarm is one of the most celebrated of those. I think he can count on the good management and good judgment of the Government, its Departments and agencies, to ensure that that record will be repeated.

The issue of a centralization of a space agency is again one which has been reviewed. There are pros and cons. There is currently an interdepartmental committee on space which has been operating quite effectively in terms of multi-year planning. As he also must know, industry is very divided as to whether or not there should be a central agency in the federal Government with respect to space activities. We could go into the pros and cons of that, but I think that would be best done during a debate on this subject in the House rather than taking the time of Members today. I take the Hon. Member's representations seriously and, as I say, he can count on us to manage the space program effectively in the future as he acknowledges we have done in the past.

JAPANESE PROPOSAL TO LICENSE COMPUTER SOFTWARE

Mr. Lorne Greenaway (Cariboo-Chilcotin): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of State for Science and Technology. I am sure that he must be aware that initiatives are presently under way in Japan to impose mandatory licensing on computer software and intellectual property. This action could be devastating to the Canadian high tech industry and surely would be a very critical development as far as Canadian jobs are concerned, since it could cost thousands of Canadian jobs. Is the Minister concerned, and has he made representations to the Japanese?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Minister of State for Economic and Regional Development and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I have not made representations of the kind to which the Hon. Member refers, but I assure him that any action that will cost Canadians jobs will be of considerable concern to us. I will take note of the Hon. Member's question and get back to him.

GOVERNMENT POLICY INQUIRY

Mr. Lorne Greenaway (Cariboo-Chilcotin): Mr. Speaker, the Minister's colleague, the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion, was recently in Japan. Surely he must have brought up this very important subject when he was over there. Recognizing that the United States Government has made very strong representations on this subject to the Japanese, is the Minister telling us that we have actually taken no action whatsoever and have not talked to the Japanese about this very