

Space Agency

• (1540)

Before I finish, I would like to congratulate Dr. Larkin Kerwin on his appointment as president of the Canadian Space Agency. He is an excellent choice, and we can only applaud this decision because it means that we will benefit from the talents of a well-known, respected and experienced scientist. Under his direction, there is no doubt that the Canadian Space Agency will bring benefits to Québec and Canada, even beyond our present expectations.

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Ottawa West on a question or comment.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member spoke for quite a while about a lot of things. She spoke very little about people, about ideas and about from where the space program in Canada has come. I cannot help but wonder if she and her Government are aware that the space program is more than hardware and circuit boards. It is people, ideas and intelligence, and that is the fundamental component.

My main question to the Hon. Member is, can she tell the House what studies, background papers and analysis were done to provide the scientists with an explanation of the step that is now being taken and the details? Can she provide assurance to the House and to the public of what the costs are associated with the establishment of the agency and where in the Estimates those costs are provided?

[Translation]

Mrs. Duplessis: First of all, if the Hon. Member had listened carefully, she would have realized what actually led up to the creation of the Agency. I am referring to a study conducted by the National Research Council in 1982, which concluded that it was important.

As for the costs, President Kerwin will certainly tell us how much he intends to spend on construction of the building and on the Agency's facilities. He has a general budget, and he has to remain within that budget, and it is not up to us to say how much he should spend on what. And when the Hon. Member refers to brains, I don't know what she is referring to, but I will wait for the next question, because hers was not very clear.

Mr. Harb: Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to congratulate the Hon. Member on her speech. I think it was clear that she supports Canada's role with respect to research and development, and she deserves to be congratulated for that!

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I have a statement as well as a question for the Hon. Member. When we talk about the manufacturing aspect, one of the most important elements is the research and development component; in particular, the research geared toward the development end of the product.

In the National Capital Region, we have in excess of 500 companies which deal with certain aspects of the research component. Some of them deal with the manufacturing end of it. We have the National Research Council and we have other agencies. We also have the presence of the international community which is represented by the embassies, including the Embassy of the United States. The United States is one of our major partners in the industry.

My question for the Hon. Member is the following one. Can she list five companies which would be considered as a support element to where the space agency is going to be located? In doing so, can she tell me what the rationale was when it came to the idea of putting the space agency in the location it was put in?

I have heard quite a bit about the discomfort that is taking place within the manpower that is going to be the brain behind the space agency. Could she elaborate a little bit for us?

[Translation]

Mrs. Duplessis: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for his kind words. However, in reply to the question put to me earlier by the hon. lady, I could have mentioned that it is based on my experience as a member of the Committee on Science and Technology which travelled everywhere in Canada and made recommendations dealing with science and technology.

With regard to Montreal being chosen as the location for the space agency, I should like to remind my hon. friend that long before the Government made a decision, this choice had been approved both by his Leader, the Right Hon. Mr. Turner, and the Leader of the New Democratic Party (M. Broadbent). In reply to his question concerning companies in Montreal which could provide support elements, I am pleased to list such