

*Space Agency*

space activities entrusted to other departments such as weather, remote sensing and communication services, as well as relations with foreign agencies.

I would like, Mr. Speaker, to discuss the entire Canadian space program but, since time is limited, I will confine my remarks to some aspects of that important strategy.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that in May 1986 the federal Government announced the creation of a new Canadian space program focusing on the economic impact of space research in terms of job creation and additional revenue for the industry. The new program met Canada's needs by allowing us to manage our natural resources, improve communications throughout the country, exercise our national sovereignty and exploit industrial resources in every region.

The main element of the program is the development of an aeronautical mobile system or AMS for the American space station, as well as the creation of a development program centered on potential space users. Among others must be mentioned the maintenance of the Telesat Canada MSAT satellite, which serves a new satellite communications network for mobile users; the theoretical and practical design of advanced remote sensing techniques, especially continued planning work on the RADARSAT remote sensing satellite, strengthening cooperation with Europe through our participation in the ESA and European space projects; continuation of the program to train Canadian astronauts and finally, increasing funding for the space sciences program.

• (1530)

The U.S. space station is one of the most complex and ambitious technological enterprises ever conceived. This station, once in orbit and permanently manned, will have a useful life of 25 years and will be the base for many activities.

Along with other countries, Canada was asked to take part in this huge enterprise and we will contribute to the mobile service system, MSS. The part of the system in space, the mobile service centre (MSC), will be involved in building the space station, which will give the first stages of the plan a leading role.

The mobile service satellite is particularly important to the everyday life of Canadians. Indeed, most of our fellow citizens would have trouble imagining how they would live if they could no longer pick up a telephone receiver and call almost anywhere in the world. However, that is exactly the situation in which more than 100,000 homes in remote and northern regions of Canada find themselves.

Distance, uneven terrain and atmospheric characteristics especially in the Far North make conventional radio communications unreliable and sometimes impossible. For the police and those responsible for fighting forest fires and for medical services, the limited range of mobile communications systems, even some of the most modern, raises serious difficulties. The same goes for companies operating oil-drilling platforms and fleets of cargo ships and trucks.

The mobile service satellite, the first internal communications satellite in the world for traveling users, solves this problem. So there is no need to add how timely and important it is to develop such a tool!

The Space Agency will also be responsible for the important space station program. Indeed, you will recall that about a year ago, the federal Government approved the participation of Canada in the international space station project led by the United States as the main element of the important Canadian space program. Canada will provide the mobile maintenance and repair system, which is based on the CANADARM teleoperator system technology. This system will play an essential role in the assembly and maintenance of the space station and its instruments. Moreover, it will handle payloads such as satellites and space vehicles and will dock, load and unload shuttles that will bring supplies to the space station.

In the 1990's, when the space station is in operation, industry, government and universities in Canada will be able to use those facilities to further scientific, technological and business interests. They will be able to do research in astrophysics, earth sciences, life sciences and material processing in conditions of quasi-weightlessness possible only in space laboratories. The space platform will also be used to assemble and service other platforms and related vehicles and to explore the solar system.