

*Space Agency*

and Services when he was quoted by *The Ottawa Sun* on February 15, 1989, as stating the following:

We have been carrying on the functions for 26 years in Ottawa, so it's perhaps an expenditure that we don't need.

That is what he said. Things do not end up with "to be or not to be". The former Minister of State for Science and Technology spent that two years of inaction telling us what the space agency would look like once the Government got around to doing it.

On March 20, 1987, the Minister, responding to a question in the House said, as reported at page 4390 of *Hansard*:

Mr. Speaker, the comprehensive space program is a national program. There is keen competition from several regions in the country for the head office of the agency, which is not in itself a job creation effort. It will involve about 40 or 50 people.

He also said to the Standing Committee on Research, Science and Technology, and again I quote:

The head office of the agency will be a very small, compact unit with perhaps 40 or 50 people. All the various components and research facilities will perhaps initially stay where they are now but will be located where they are now or in different regions and centres in the country. It is not intended to establish the space agency with all its assets and facilities in one area.

If experience is our guide, it appears that we can tell that the Government is changing its mind when it changes Ministers. The current Minister of State for Science and Technology, as opposed to the Minister of State for Science and Technology who is a different person, announced a space agency with over 200 people at its head office.

That same Minister, also the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, has shown just how arrogant the Government is when he refused to tell us exactly how much it would cost to set up the head office.

These kinds of antics give us the impression that the Government's appreciation of the importance of space technology amounts to no more than the interest a child has in a new toy.

This is not *Star Trek*. Canadians object to having their space program being treated like a scene from the comedy movie, *Space Balls*. I am sure you saw it, Mr. Speaker. It features comedian John Candy driving a Winnebago around the universe. That is the way this Government has played with this space agency issue. The Minister of Industry, Science and Technology plays the

role of driver, and he sometimes resembles the driver of a getaway car. He is driving the space Winnebago around the country with a big sticker on the side which reads: "Vote Conservative", and he is leaving behind it chaos.

This comedy of errors has led to questionable expectations as well as unanswered questions. This entire matter of the establishment of the Canadian Space Agency is a case in point demonstrating at once the arrogance, incompetence, indecision, and political ineptitude of this Government.

What ought to have been a relatively simply matter was dragged out through political manipulation and indecision until the whole affair became a national tragicomedy.

Instead of creating a shining star in our high-tech universe, a focus of national pride in our achievements as a small but able nation, the Government has created a symbol of disunity, pitting region against region, province against province. It has ignored the concerns of our small but excellent band of space scientists who fear that controversies surrounding the creation of the agency will jeopardize their work.

I plead with the Government and with the Minister to launch this very day a peace initiative with the scientists and technicians upon whom the success of our space program depends. These people have genuine reason to believe that the bungling over the last three years augurs very badly for the space program. They do not want nor do they need to be associated with failure.

The success of the Canadian Space Program does not depend, with all due respect, upon the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology or the able Minister of State for Science and Technology. It depends upon the men and women with the expertise, the commitment and the years of experience, and they need to be taken into account.

I would also like to reflect some concerns that must be mentioned about Canada's space program such as the level of expenditures on space science. This was a matter that raised the concern of the Standing Committee on Research, Science and Technology in its excellent report that was tabled in the last House. Many of its concerns are still relevant and still need to be addressed. It expressed the concern in its report about the level of spending on space science.

Members of the committees note, and I am quoting from their report, "funding has declined from approximately 15 per cent of the space program budget to less than 10 per cent. This level of funding is significantly lower than that provided in the space budgets of other