

PRIME MINISTER

Esprit

I agreed to find out more on the share of the Esprit programme which UK firms had secured. So far 38 projects have been agreed and UK firms will participate in 21 of them and be the lead firm in 11. This compares with Germany, participating in 25 and leading in 8 and France, participating in 20 and leading in 5. Of the 12 major companies involved 3 - GEC, Plessey and ICL - are British.

It is not possible at this stage to translate this involvement into money terms but it seems clear from the above that UK participation will be significantly above the 22% which we contribute to the costs of the programme.

AT

1 December 1983