

Nuclear Liability

previous speaker indicated. During the interval we will have a chance to take a look at it and to talk to people who will have to write insurance under it. We will be in a better position another year to bring in any amendments that are needed. I have no hesitation in letting the bill pass at this stage.

Mr. Rod Thomson (Battleford-Kindersley): Mr. Speaker, my comments will be brief. Some of the witnesses who appeared before the committee complained about high insurance costs. They indicated that, particularly as far as exporting atomic energy equipment was concerned, the margin was very narrow and that the high cost of insurance significantly affected that margin. They felt, for this reason, that the cost of insurance certainly should not go up but, rather, should come down.

• (4:50 p.m.)

We know that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Greene) has had difficulty obtaining sales for Canada's atomic energy plants. We certainly do not wish to add to his difficulty in this regard. We would like to see something done so that he can offer a better product at a lower price. I think it has been indicated already that we might have to review this bill in another year to make sure that this type of legislation is in line with what it should be. Since this is a new field, underwriters of insurance do not want to commit themselves in the they would in respect of any other type of insurance.

Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I should like to thank the members of the committee for the very fine work they did on this difficult bill and for the improvement that were made as a result of their deliberations. Very often I think the public does not appreciate how much tough slugging and useful work in Parliament is done in the committees and how little public coverage is given to the efforts of members of committees. Certainly this bill is a very good example in respect of a completely new field and a difficult and esoteric area where improvements have been made. These improvements were made possible as a result of the very effective work of the committee. I wish to thank the members of the committee for their very great contribution in this regard.

I quite appreciate that we probably do not have all the answers. This is a new field. I think it is important that this measure be

[Mr. Harding.]

carried out. Of course, the greatest hope of all of us is that the tragedy it is made to cover will never occur, because if it should I suppose our legislative efforts will not be long remembered thereafter. Certainly the committee was most useful in this regard, and I wish to thank members of the committee and hon. members of this House for their co-operation in this matter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD ACT

AMENDMENTS RESPECTING DEFINITIONS, ADMINISTRATIVE POWERS, ETC.

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-190, to amend the National Energy Board Act, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: An amendment has been proposed at the report stage by the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Harding). I must again confess to difficulty about the admissibility of the amendment. I am prepared to hear argument, but it would seem to me that the proposed amendment goes beyond the scope of the bill.

Mr. Harding: Mr. Speaker, the amendment which is on the Order Paper is a clearly defined amendment. I do not think it goes beyond the scope of the bill. It would add to and perhaps define a little more clearly the jurisdictional aspects of the commission which will be given an opportunity to check, in this particular case, the environmental, ecological and pollution risk aspects, for example in respect of the building of an oil or energy pipeline which might affect the ecology of the northern parts of Canada. For that reason I suggest the amendment would not place an untoward task before the commission. It would slightly widen, and I believe clarify, the duties which we would expect the commission to perform in assessing the value of certain of the projects. Have I permission to proceed, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Mr. Greene: Mr. Speaker, on the question of the admissibility of the amendment