

Eldorado Nuclear Limited

● (1200)

They have taken four days in this Chamber and have spoken out of the two sides of their mouths. The filibuster continues. On Monday of this week we heard the House Leader say that this should go to committee soon. We heard him make another speech on Tuesday and another speech yet on Wednesday.

Mr. Benjamin: Who?

Mr. Hawkes: The Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis), the House Leader.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Will the Hon. Member put the question please.

Mr. Hawkes: I would be happy to, Mr. Speaker. What is the honest statement of reality? Is the New Democratic Party, as expressed by its leadership, moving this Bill to committee to hear expert witnesses to see if we got it right, or is the back-bench revolt a planned revolt? Is the House Leader saying one thing in this Chamber which is different from what the behaviour tells us? From which part of the NDP are we hearing? What is the lie and what is the truth? Is this going to committee or is it going to get filibustered?

Mr. McCurdy: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Calgary West has become downright revolting. We do not have back-bench revolts over here. I suppose that in his environment the Hon. Member thinks that all Parties are subject to back-room revolt. We do not have any little cabals in our Party or anything of the sort. The Hon. Member should disabuse himself of that kind of silly observation.

I have never heard such an abject confession of the ideological basis of this and so much else that the Government is doing. The Hon. Member says that he was not elected here as someone competent to do a number of things. A government does a great many things, and I am sure that we would all agree that the Hon. Member is not competent in any of them. However, I do not understand why the Hon. Member would submit the argument that it follows that if we are not competent in mining we are not competent in public health, medicine, science, or forestry.

The Hon. Member has said clearly that the motivation behind this legislation is thoughtlessly ideological and because it is thoughtlessly ideological we have a piece of thoughtless legislation before us now which disregards the proper role of government.

Let me disabuse the Hon. Member of his perception of where this Party stands. This Party is a social democratic Party. If the Hon. Member is so narrow in his understanding and knowledge not to know that the highest percentage of private ownership exists under a social democratic Government in Sweden, then he knows nothing, but then he has confessed that previously.

This Party understands that there are certain situations in which it is in the national interest that certain industries and

certain businesses be in government or Crown hands. It understands as well that there are industries and businesses which should remain in private hands. The decision is to be made in the interests of the public or national welfare, whether that be in terms of the production of jobs, which is the highest priority, or the environment, which is of equally high priority. Those kinds of considerations may so heavily weigh in favour of public ownership that we, in those circumstances, would propose it.

However, that does not necessarily mean that private ownership, in the vast majority of circumstances, would not be in that same interest so long as what is done is on the basis of a strategy of prosperity for this country. I hope that that will provide a basic understanding for the Hon. Member which has been so difficult for us to provide to him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. The Hon. Member for Kenora—Rainy River (Mr. Parry).

Mr. John Parry (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity today to address a few remarks of my own to the privatization of Eldorado Nuclear. The New Democratic Party opposes this privatization for much the same reasons that we oppose the deal which has been made with the United States, because it is fundamentally a bad deal and one which does not hold the prospects of profit or benefit for the people of Canada.

The deal is structured in such a way that the private sector, presumably the eventual owners if this Bill passes, of Eldorado Nuclear will get the profits, profits generated not only from the commercial activities of the company which will be formed by the eventual merger of Eldorado and the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation, but profits also that have been made possible by the very heavy public subsidies that have been given to the uranium mining industry over a number of years in the form of favourable taxation, marketing arrangements, sweetheart contracts and, I might say, some forms of political manipulation and protection as well. We have no assurance that the Government even recognizes the benefit that it is conferring on the private sector by this privatization.

I think that Canadians would more readily excuse the Tories if they were to say honestly that they are going to give things to the private sector at less than their full value on the basis of potential income generation because, as Tories, they believe in the private sector and see this as a useful way to further that belief and their own ideological agenda. However, it does not seem that the Government has had the straightforwardness to confess to the Canadian public. I can assure the Government that if it were to make the confession in such terms, it might get a better response than it has received to this sly way of using the backroads to sneak through another privatization on the Canadian people.