

Adjournment Debate

but do not sign hard-to-see contracts with provincial governments, do not only vaguely hint at more projects down the line for the same community and a demonstration vault which would actually contain nuclear waste. Do not just consult the public only as a last resort and do not patronize your opponents with the increasingly embarrassing, empty vanity of technocrats who operate under such a veil of secrecy that it is no wonder people are suspicious.

The Canadian people can handle the facts, they can handle the truth. That is why I ask the minister's parliamentary secretary, when we are going to get a full-fledged public and parliamentary debate on nuclear power in this country, and if we are not going to get it, why not? If AECL is really the servant of the people and not possessed by its own internal technological imperatives, then it should welcome such a debate. The people who work for AECL and its management should welcome, as well, their retraining for the solar technology, if that is what the public chooses.

The time has come to sort out the conflict of interest whereby AECL is not only responsible for protecting the public against the risks which are inherent in nuclear technology, but is also the major proponents of that technology in this country. I think it is high time the government recognized, first, that a debate is necessary; second, that the democratic process must be respected in every aspect of development of this technology; and third, that the time has come for some sorting out of the conflict of interest in which we continually find AECL whereby the public is put in the horrible position of having to take the word of the very people whose self-interest it is to instal the projects, the safety of which they are worried about.

Mr. Roy MacLaren (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, for a moment I shall try not to bore the hon. member opposite by reading something but, rather, I will draw to his attention that perhaps he is confusing, to some degree, the procedure in the province of Ontario with that in the province of Manitoba.

Recently there were press releases in Ontario concerning some preliminary research regarding, for example, groundwater and fly-overs in the Crown lands of Ontario where there are no incorporated townships. In those areas that type of preliminary research has been carried on with the agreement of the Ontario government and with full public notice.

With regard to Manitoba, the situation is somewhat different because there, of course, the plans are to build an underground research laboratory, at the Whiteshell Research Establishment.

● (2225)

That laboratory will conduct research—I hope the hon. member will excuse me for reading this passage—“in geology, mining techniques, hydro-geology, heat transfer through rock at depth and pressure, performance of potential repository backfill materials and other related work.”

The plans to proceed with that research work which is being developed in consultation with the Manitoba government have been extensively described to the local community, and there has been a series of consultative procedures to ensure full public knowledge and the opportunity to participate in the detail of those plans.

With reference to the hon. member's final point, the final authority for nuclear safety matters in Canada resides with the Atomic Energy Control Board and not with Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. The board's procedures, which are well known, will be fully observed by the Canadian government when it proceeds, in consultation with the Ontario government in the case of Ontario and with the Manitoba government in the case of Manitoba, with the further development of research into the safe disposal of spent nuclear fuel.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until two o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

At 10.27 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.