

at this time. It also represents the combined opinion of provincial health officials, through the now defunct Dominion Council of Health, but is still unquestioned by the Conference of Deputy Ministers of Health. And it permits a continued and centralized contact with international agencies, such as the International Commission on Radiological Protection, whose advice is part of the basis on which standards are set.

The matter of environmental protection in nuclear regulation presents significant potential for ambiguity. Nuclear facilities are within federal regulatory jurisdiction, the Atomic Energy Control Act providing the only legislative framework. The environment to be protected, however, is clearly an area of primarily provincial concern, though federal concern can never be eliminated, particularly for facilities at or near a provincial or international boundary. At both federal and provincial levels, there exist government bodies with the responsibility and the expertise for environmental protection, and it would seem to me the AECB has neither the justification nor the desire to duplicate what already exists. Indeed, the AECB currently incorporates the environmental protection standards of other jurisdictions through its licensing process. Furthermore, at the federal level, the AECB counts on Environment Canada for expertise—it can draw on experts from other Departments and the private sector—and recognizes the value and role of the environmental assessment and review process. Since there is more potential for difficulty to arise between federal and provincial bodies, a joint regulatory process has been designed to overcome such difficulties. I understand that this system has worked very well.

Reading through this Bill, one gets the impression that it was prepared a little hastily. For instance, the mention of uranium and thorium mines and mills as nuclear facilities subject to controls is missing, although there is a reference to the licensing of extraction and production. Furthermore, the new Nuclear Control Board would be empowered to make regulations respecting the development, mining and milling of uranium and thorium. Since nuclear facilities are the main regulatory focus of the Bill, this would present an awkward situation. One would have to ask how and by whom these regulations would be enforced. Would the public stand for the federal Government treating mines and mills any differently than major nuclear facilities?

• (1740)

Hasty preparation is also marked by the fact that while the employees of the new Board are only to be interested in the general public and the environment, the Bill would give the Board the power to make regulations providing for protection of persons who, because of their work or professional activity, may come into contact with or may be exposed to prescribed substances. In other words, the details of the Bill do not jibe entirely.

There are also a number of items in the Bill which collectively give cause to be concerned about intent. For instance, given the large number of members contemplated and reference to substitute members, one wonders if there is not an effort here to make it easy to infiltrate the Board with delegates of one persuasion or another. This is why I said at the

outset that members of the Board must be impartial and must have the expertise to make judgments.

There are various interest groups talking about nuclear energy, but usually when we talk about nuclear interests we think of those people who are actually in the nuclear industry. I submit that those groups opposed to the nuclear research industry are also interest groups. We cannot look at this in a puritanical way by saying, "You are wrong and I am pure".

As well, the inclusion of provisos on Board member employment before and after their appointment at the very least suggests an unreasonable mistrust of the common decency of potential appointees. At worst, it could be an attempt to emasculate the Board by depriving it of necessary expertise or willing candidates.

Unfortunately the Bill is silent on the delegation of authority to issue licences. Undoubtedly this reflects a lack of understanding of the workload involved and perhaps misplaced zeal to require the Board to deliberate on every licensing action. With the number of extant or still existing AECB licences in Canada approaching 5,000, I fail to see how the Board could cope in anything other than semi-permanent session. Otherwise, the whole Canadian radioisotope business—industrial, medical, agricultural and experimental—would grind to a halt. As a matter of fact, the wording of the Bill is very much oriented toward dealing with nuclear facilities and, therefore, it would impose tremendous administrative loads on the more mundane but very numerous licensing actions dealing with prescribed substance uses.

During the past 36 years I believe the Board has consistently exhibited a dedicated commitment to serve Canadians as the guardian of safety in nuclear matters through the development and application of stringent controls. This considerable responsibility enabling decisions to be taken by the people through their elected representatives with a degree of confidence is not popularly associated with the sophisticated technology of the nuclear energy field.

The confidence we enjoy in the nuclear regulatory process as it now exist encourages me to observe that while the Bill is founded on good basic principles and good intent, there are too many unresolved questions and issues to warrant its support by the House.

In closing, I would simply like to say that people who work in the nuclear industry and have considerable expertise listen to television programs and commentators talk about the interests of the future of humanity and the safety of my children, their children and our children's children. The AECB has been involved in that over the past 36 years. Those same people who work in the nuclear industry and try to do their day-to-day work in a very constructive manner feel somewhat hurt by someone insinuating that they are not interested in their children or their children's children. People who work in the atomic energy research and nuclear field are as interested in their children's children as anyone else. I should like to erase that error in judgment and comment before taking my seat.