

Industrial Research Incentives Act

cial power production early in the autumn of this year. Belgium is building the second plant.

• (8:40 p.m.)

Is our Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce not on the job, attempting to sell this country another plant, or do they have some doubts about our capacity to build these plants, keep them up-to-date and equal to atomic energy plants in the rest of the world?

As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, there are some theoretical possibilities for increasing the efficiency of the type of atomic energy plant which we have in Canada. We must do more in a practical sense, to develop these methods. I would not like to think that we have chosen wrongly in this regard. A lot of Canadian money has been invested in this field. Having chosen this field and having invested a lot of Canadian money, talent and expertise, and having committed our industry to this particular line, we should be spending a great deal more in this area so that these possibilities may be developed in future Canadian atomic energy plants.

As a further illustration I wish to refer to a booklet dealing with the study of intense neutron generators. I believe this study was carried out with encouragement from the present Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) when he was Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It is suggested in this study that if we are to keep our engineers in Canada, we must provide them with jobs and a certain volume of business. This would keep them occupied and carry the industry, if you will. If we do not sell plants abroad, the volume in Canada will not be sufficient to do this. It is a similar situation to the chicken and the egg. I suggest it is necessary to obtain orders from other countries. To do this we must spend more money on research and development. I hope the minister will comment on this aspect of the matter.

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew North): There are a few comments which I wish to make, Mr. Speaker. I was pleased with the way the hon. member for Battleford-Kindersley (Mr. Thomson) spoke about what has been done in Canada in the field of nuclear energy. When speaking in the budget debate last week I did not get entirely on the record the fact that certain individuals in Canada are attacking our scientific community in the field of nuclear reactors and hydro power. I feel that Canadians working in atomic energy are top scientists and are doing an excellent job.

[Mr. Thomson.]

Per capita we have many good scientists compared with other countries. I think it is time all hon. members backed our Canadian scientific community instead of permitting individuals to tear it apart.

I have a great personal interest in this matter. At Chalk River and Deep River, both of which are in my riding, there are a large number of top-notch technical and scientific men. They have done a great deal to advise industry and hydro companies when building nuclear power plants. There has been much inaccurate information spread across this country about some of these nuclear power plants. I stand in their defence tonight, not just because they are in my constituency; there are many more in the same class across Canada. Canada is at a stage in scientific development today where we have to start thinking positively instead of negatively.

We must stop criticizing every little thing that goes wrong in the nuclear power and atomic energy field. This is a large field. Canada was one of the forerunners in the world in nuclear power. Canadians should be proud of this fact. As in any new field, small errors and mistakes are made. When Members of Parliament are elected to this House they make mistakes the first few times. They may make mistakes at the end of their time here: some hon. members never become total professionals. The same can be expected of our scientific community.

One thing we can expect is that our scientific community will be dedicated to its job. Our scientists do the best they can to keep Canada at the forefront in scientific development. If anything positive is to result from this debate tonight, it is that the Canadian scientific community deserves the praise of the Canadian people. Canadian scientists must be given leeway. If a few mistakes are made along the way, we must remember that we learn from our mistakes. Let us give them credit for the work they have done in this country, and encourage them to continue in this fashion.

I feel it is of great advantage if scientific help at the government level can be loaned to industry to help it develop, particularly in the nuclear field. This is the sort of thing we should be doing. There are many large industries in Canada which, because of their profit bases cannot afford to develop nuclear power to operate their plants on a more modern scale than is presently done in this or any other country in the western world. The Canadian government has a responsibility to