

Supply—Trade and Commerce

take this opportunity of urging upon the Minister of Trade and Commerce that a special committee of the house be set up at this session to consider the working of the atomic energy control board or the work of the research council. The minister will remember that a recommendation of last year's committee was to this effect:

Your committee has been in existence for only six weeks and in that time has been unable to complete its examination into the field of atomic energy development. Furthermore, this field is a new one, is widening rapidly, and may well be of tremendous importance to Canada. For these reasons your committee recommends that a special committee be reconstituted next session.

On the last day of the session I raised this question, and the minister's reply will be found at page 3108 of *Hansard*. He said:

I presume the next session will come early in the new year. I fully agree with my hon. friend that the work of the committee was splendid. I believe it had a good deal to do with raising the spirits of the staff at Chalk River. It occurs to me that a similar committee might be set up to look into all the work of the national research council, including atomic energy. I am not promising that, but such a proposal could be considered next year.

Atomic energy developments, of course, are going on all the time, and the work of the research council is progressing, too. Great strides are being made by that council. It is of the utmost importance that the house should be kept in touch with these developments. I am quite sure that other hon. members who served on the atomic energy committee last year will agree with me when I say that the co-operation in that committee was excellent. Everyone who belonged to it was very proud to be a member, and felt that there was a great deal more work to be done. It would be a pity if that work were not to be continued during the present session. I urge upon the minister that he agree to the setting up of a committee at this session to consider either the work of the atomic energy control board, or, in line with his own suggestion, to deal with the work of the national research council.

Mr. Howe: The matter will be given consideration.

Mr. Adamson: This is an item of \$200,000. Most of the work is not public. What is the total cost of the Chalk River plant? Does it sell radioactive isotopes to industry? If so, what is the revenue from those sales?

Mr. Howe: Mr. Chairman, this item simply covers certain supplies. I do not know what the total cost is. I suppose it is getting up toward \$27 million or \$28 million.

Mr. Adamson: That is the total capital cost.

Mr. Howe: Yes. The revenue is small, but it is beginning to build up. I think in the

year 1950-51 there will be substantial revenue, perhaps running to \$250,000 or \$300,000.

Mr. Drew: Will the minister make a definite statement as to whether there will be a committee?

Mr. Howe: No.

Mr. Drew: So we are just left to guess as to whether there may or may not be a committee?

Mr. Howe: Yes.

Mr. Drew: This is a perfect example of the way the government keeps demanding that there be some co-operation, but offers none.

The Deputy Chairman: Order.

Mr. Sinclair: Carried.

The Deputy Chairman: The hon. member for Cape Breton South.

Mr. Fraser: Well, well.

Mr. Gillis: Mr. Chairman, I should like to say a word on this particular item. As a rule the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra is very much to the point in his remarks. In this particular instance I do not think he is. I think that instead of asking for the setting up of a committee on atomic energy, specifically, the main attempt of this committee should be to set up a committee on defence matters, generally, because I feel that this matter of atomic energy is one that is tied in directly with matters of defence.

The Deputy Chairman: I understand the hon. member wishes to speak to item 614?

Mr. Gillis: Yes.

The Deputy Chairman: That refers to the Chalk River project, capital and operating expenses, \$200,000.

Mr. Gillis: Yes, and that is exactly the item I am talking about. So far as I am concerned, the amount required in this vote, for the purposes for which it is intended, receives my hearty approval. I am completely in accord with it. At the same time I do not think these two matters can be separated to any great extent.

The hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra was permitted to make a suggestion that a committee should be set up to supervise, scrutinize and report to the house concerning matters which may come within the scope of this vote. It is concerning the remarks of the hon. member that I wish to speak. I say that a committee of that kind at this time is not one which would meet with my approval. In my view the time has come when we should get down to considering a main committee on defence.