

*Adjournment Debate*

technical expert, but I would not let a farm dug-out or septic tank system run the way they let that run.

The alarm system was referred to by AECB as being out of action for 15 hours during the spill. In fact, it had been disconnected since 1985. I found out since then that AECB officials have inspected that site at least 25 or 30 times and never noted the fact that this very critical alarm system was not working. They have also approved the same design using the same system for new pits right in Collins Bay and this system was approved. The same regulators are looking at the Cigar Lake mine very close by.

• (1810 )

On November 14 the Indian people of northern Saskatchewan accompanied by myself and the MLA, with senior officials of the Department of Indian Affairs, Health and Welfare Canada, Environment Canada, Atomic Energy Control Board and the Saskatchewan Minister of the Environment and his officials had a meeting. It was a very productive meeting. But again there was new information that we received. Namely, two things: One, if they had been mining in the Rabbit Lake pit at the time that the spill occurred the toxic levels would have been five times as high as they were now. We would have had a very serious environmental catastrophe if the spill had occurred while they were mining. Fortunately, there was no mining going on at the time.

We also found that what was discharged was 440,000 gallons of untreated mine waste. In fact, it contained a level of radium 226 at 5 to 8 becquerels. That is very technical language but the discharge limit is one becquerel. So what was discharged into that bay, 440,000 gallons worth, is in fact serious even in and of itself because there are spawning areas for both whitefish and jackfish in the area.

On November 15 the Prince Albert District Chiefs and the Wollaston Lake Band held a press conference in Prince Albert calling for a formal public, independent, comprehensive, inquiry into the spill. On November 15 there was a press conference held here in Ottawa where representatives of the Canadian Labour Congress, Indigenous Survival International, Mennonite Central Committee, Greenpeace and Cultural Survival Canada joined

in supporting the call for an inquiry. Having examined the evidence, they joined the call for an inquiry.

On November 24 Chief Ed Benoanie formally presented his call for a public inquiry to the Minister of Energy. He also had a conversation with the Minister of the Environment and outlined his case to them why it is critical not only from the standpoint of what happened specifically with the spill and the environmental consequences and so on, but the whole interaction and the inter-relationship between the Indian people of the north and this industry and other industries that operate in their lands.

This afternoon I attended my first Atomic Energy Control Board meeting. Attending there as well were representatives from the community of Port Hope because a Cameco application for increasing their discharge limits was on the table. I heard there that an incident occurred in 1983 at Port Hope where there was a fire in the facility and that many people evacuated the town. It was a disaster nearly averted again. It came to light at that time that there was no emergency procedure in place at Port Hope for evacuating the town and there was no equipment in the town to deal with the potential crisis. What appalled me and makes me quite sceptical about these regulators is that it does not exist today either. There is no emergency plan in Port Hope. They are still working on one six years later. There is very little reason for confidence in the regulators.

I would like to again stress that there needs to be a comprehensive inquiry. In an article in the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix* on November 24 it stated that staff levels were too low to prevent spills from the Atomic Energy Control Board.

We cannot have the regulators investigating themselves. I know that their investigations about Cameco's operations are under way and charges might be laid. But somebody has to look at these regulators. This is a regulatory meltdown and it has to be looked at in an independent way. It has to be comprehensive and include everything that they regulate, as well as the interaction between the native people of the north and this industry. It also has to be public because in this era of *glasnost* at a time when there is tremendous concern about our environment and the long-term consequences of what we do, the public will not be satisfied if this is not