

Oral Questions

The engineering capability of AECL and other members of the Canadian nuclear engineering fraternity is of a world standard.

Quite frankly I do not think we need a bunch of foreigners to tell us whether or not we can build submarines in Canada.

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CANADA POST CORPORATION**INTRODUCTION OF NEW SECURITY PROCEDURES**

Mr. John Parry (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, Canada Post is in the process of introducing questionable and Draconian security practices in its larger operations. It appears that on the same day that in Calgary searches of inside workers leaving and coming to the job were being started, Canada Post was opening in Dryden, Ontario, a pick-up outlet for parcels where security of the mails, which after all is the main objective, left a great deal to be desired.

• (1415)

Canada Post is setting itself up for a confrontation with its unions. It has not undertaken any sensible or intelligent discussion with those unions in regard to security procedures that may be desirable to protect the mail. This sort of provocative action, contrasted with other measures which, in effect, diminish the security of mail, will stand as a stain on the corporation's record if not erased.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE**ACQUISITION OF NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINES**

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am sort of at a loss as to whom in the Government of Canada one directs questions on general matters today.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): The holidays haven't started yet.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I take no comfort from the sudden, belated arrival of the Minister of Justice.

I have a question on the White Paper on National Defence and do not know to whom I should address it. If I direct it to the Acting Minister of National Defence I am sure Canadians will sleep better knowing that he—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gauthier: Here's the big shot now.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): It's just a matter of waiting, Mr. Speaker. I was going to say, in the Prime

Minister's absence, that if the Acting Minister of National Defence delivers defence the way he is delivering the mail, the country is in real trouble.

I have a question for the Prime Minister. The debate about the White Paper on National Defence produced by the Minister of National Defence has provoked some extraordinary comments from Conservative cabinet Ministers and Conservative Members of Parliament.

However, the paper has produced some very intelligent criticism. The world's leading submarine experts have said that the Government's plan to spend billions and billions of dollars on a nuclear-powered submarine fleet is, to use the words of these experts, "incredible", "totally unreal", and "political posturing".

How can the Government justify spending up to \$16 billion on a nuclear-powered submarine fleet plus unlimited maintenance costs when this project has already been labelled "unnecessary" and "rubbish"?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the White Paper on National Defence was designed specifically, among other things, to invite discussion and debate among Canadians and others as a result of 16 years of very substantial neglect by our predecessors in regard to this vital aspect of our national well-being.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): That's a Green Paper, not a White Paper.

Mr. Mulroney: Everyone and his brother will have an opinion on various variables of this very important matter. We are satisfied that the effect of the White Paper will strengthen Canada's sovereignty and will make a major commitment to the well-being of our Armed Forces which can serve Canada in a strengthened and very important way both here and around the world.

[Translation]

WHITE PAPER—EFFICIENCY—PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the nuclear powered submarines project proposed by the Minister of National Defence, to use the Prime Minister's words, is not a subject for discussion but rather a subject of ridicule on the international scene.

Does it not embarrass the Prime Minister that one of the great world experts on naval matters, Captain John Moore, qualified the White Paper as rubbish? Couldn't the Prime Minister find a better way to spend billions of dollars than spending it on a project that is of no use either to Canadian sovereignty or national defence?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we are not the slightest bit concerned about the opinions of all and sundry on the scope of the White Paper. It is a national document and its purpose is to make up for fifteen years of lost time and lost spending, as a result of which the