

Supply

Ontario, New Brunswick and Quebec from the uranium and nuclear fuel cycle.

Therefore I suggest it is necessary for the Government to continue to support this industry since it provides many benefits to the country in terms of jobs, exports and electrical energy. I hope that the Government will continue to encourage and support the nuclear industry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): Questions, comments and answers? Debate.

Mr. Bob Ogle (Saskatoon East): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to support this motion, moved by my colleague for Regina East (Mr. de Jong), which deals with the consequences of the nuclear energy situation in Canada. It is a situation that demands a careful study by all sides at this time. We are at a critical point in our history.

I have enjoyed the serious nature the debate has taken up to this point and I wish to convey my remarks with the same seriousness. I believe this is an extremely important question which justifies the proposal in our motion for the establishment of a royal commission to study the nuclear fuel cycle in Canada. I wish to make my remarks from a different point of view but with the same seriousness as other Hon. Members and speak generally about the difficulty of making moral decisions as they relate to different aspects of our lives. I suspect many people in the House at different times in their education have studied how one makes a human decision and how the morality of that decision is determined. It may have been done under some school auspices, in an ethics class or in some church community, but everyone somehow or other—perhaps it was only with his or her parents—has decided why certain things are good and certain things are evil as they affect human beings. Approximately 30 years or 40 years ago when many of us were taking up such studies when we were younger, the study of morality was much easier because the situations and problems faced by people were simpler. The morality which became part of our lives and affected the way in which we made judgments about our lives and the lives of those around us had a strong emphasis upon personal morality.

• (1530)

The nuclear debate which we are facing today and other questions similar to it demand that we restudy the way we face such a problem from the moral point of view. Most people believe that making a moral judgment about a private act or about their relationship with another person carries with it good or evil. There are circumstances which make the act good or evil. The intentions of the person involved are an extremely important part of the act or the morality of the act. However, today we as people, individuals, communities, parliaments and governments have a much more complicated judgment to make about many things. This change has happened in our own lifetime. For instance, when I was a young person I had no idea of what uranium was. I had no idea about what could be done with it. I remember well the atomic explosion at Nagasaki, as you do, Mr. Speaker. From that a different kind

of life resulted or a different kind of invasion, in a sense, took place into our world about which we as human beings had to make judgments. Shortly after discovering that atomic power could be used for destruction or to do something good, most people had a feeling that we should go ahead and try it to see what it could do, that perhaps we had captured a great power which could solve many problems. However, since that time I and many others have begun to see that in the whole question of nuclear development there are problems built into it of moral dimension, not unlike many areas of our human lives which we have to face as political people, religious people and individuals.

The same kinds of moral questions are now being asked about non-renewable materials, the whole question of fuels which were in the soil over long periods of geological history such as gasoline. Once they are depleted, we will never be able to use them again. Should we use them all up at a particular period in history?

Another moral dimension is to be found in the problem of pollution. When I was young I do not believe I even knew what the word "pollution" meant. Yet today industries, businesses, communities and countries are faced with massive pollution problems at all levels of their existence. There is pollution of the oceans, waterways, land and air. There is destruction and breakdown of our ecology, a major human action induced and brought about by human beings, not by some other force. Because it is a human action, it will have about it a morality, whether it is good or evil or whether it is for building up or tearing down the human community. At the same time there has been use of materials which at one time we thought had no limits, for instance, forest products. In Canada 50 years ago it seemed that there was no limit to wood products. People who knew South America and the Amazon jungle felt that we would never use them all up, but now I know from personal observation that these tracts of forests which at one time seemed unlimited are limited. By using them up, major things have happened in our countries with the climate, erosion, the filling up of rivers and many other things. Here we are as human beings sitting with these problems before us and having yet to make moral judgments about them.

I am well aware that the people participating in this debate are conscious of this reality. However, we have to bring into this debate the question of how we, living in 1984 relate to people in the future. Many of the products, which we have used up in this century for instance, took millions of years to prepare. They have been used up. What about the generations which will come after us in greater numbers than any preceding generation simply because the population of the world is expanding and growing?

I would like to advance the proposition as to how we as parliamentarians—and I do not say this in a partisan way but as a human being elected to represent people—make judgments about moral actions that will have a massive influence on the future. No absolute decisions can be made about this, but I believe it is important to look at the question as we