

*Oral Questions***ATOMIC ENERGY OF CANADA LIMITED**

DISCUSSIONS WITH UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of External Affairs and is in regard to his answer to me on January 28 in the House. He said, and I quote from *Hansard* at page 1726:

—any discussions that are going on now between AECL and the U.S. Department of Defense have nothing to do with the modernization of the northern radar warning system—

Does the Minister stand by the statement? If he does, would he explain, in light of his answer, President Reagan's budget which states clearly that AECL is the lead funding agency, along with the U.S. Air Force, for the construction of unattended nuclear reactors for the north warning system in Canada?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I stand by my statement but, naturally, I will read President Reagan's budget with the same obvious care as its supporters in the New Democratic Party. I will then come back to the House with any change in an answer, if that reading requires a change. The point I have made in the House of Commons is that the question of the renewal of the north warning system is a separate question from any negotiations which AECL might be carrying on with the U.S. Department of Defense.

REFERENCE TO MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I believe I can clear that up. Would the Minister explain why, at page 681 of the Congressional Budget Request, under the subtitle "North Warning Power Project. Defense. Nuclear energy programs", it states the intention to install unattended, untested nuclear power reactors in the Canadian Arctic in 1987, and that the memorandum of agreement on cost-sharing with AECL is in progress now?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, obviously what that means is that there has been a discussion between AECL and the U.S. Department of Defense having to do with the maintenance of any system which might be put in place in northern Canada. That matter has not been reviewed or cleared by the Cabinet. There has not been any approval to AECL to go ahead with that question, because the Hon. Member opposite raised to my attention the concerns of Inuit people and others in the North having to do with any kind of nuclear installation, even for heating or fuelling purposes.

The point I want to make clear is that it is of the utmost irresponsibility for Hon. Members in this House to suggest, whether deliberately or not, that there is any consideration being given to developments in northern Canada which would put nuclear weapons in Canada's North. There is no such intention.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

PUBLIC WORKS

OPTIMUM USE OF SPACE—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Public Works.

In his last report, the Auditor General said that a maximum use of space would result in savings of \$35 million a year.

Can the Minister tell us whether he intends to put on sale the buildings and lots representing 6 million square feet and costing the Government over \$25 million in maintenance and contributions in lieu of taxes?

Hon. Roch La Salle (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say to my colleague that we already have reduced by 30,000 square feet the unused space mentioned by the Auditor General and that an operation is under way in order to dispose, in an orderly fashion and with due consideration for private interests, of space that will be made surplus to our needs through that good management which is given great importance in the report.

* * *

[English]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

PREMIER'S TRIAL—SOLICITOR GENERAL'S MEETING WITH PREMIER

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. The Solicitor General should know that there is all the difference in the world in agreeing to meet with a provincial Premier under ordinary circumstances on a policy or administration matter and in agreeing to meet with a provincial Premier when he is under investigation for a criminal offence, with his lawyer present, in a secret place, a hotel, "a neutral place", according to his own words. The Minister should know that there is all the difference in the world in meeting under those two circumstances. Would the Minister be agreeable to meet any Canadian who is charged with a similar criminal offence in the same way he did with Premier Hatfield?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I believe I have already responded to that question. I am surprised that the former Solicitor General does not realize the difference between someone being charged and someone who is merely under investigation. I would say to him that in both cases the words of his Leader on November 30 have some relevance. There is a presumption of innocence, and for a provincial Premier to request a meeting in order to discuss or brief the Solicitor General about a matter of concern, I feel—obviously the former Solicitor General does not—that that is an acceptable thing to do.