

Candu Reactor Sales

but, nevertheless, I think the decision was wrong and it was a very important one.

There are policies and standards, Mr. Speaker. I believe the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacGuigan) has stated that these standards will not be lowered, and in that he is right. The hon. member who just spoke said he does not want any policy at all. The policy he wants is laissez-faire—sell the reactor to anybody. If that is the case, I do not know why he brought the resolution.

I want to return now to the question of the Candu reactor itself, Mr. Speaker. It is a good reactor, if you like nuclear reactors. There are two problems with them and the first is a serious one. The fact is that we cannot dispose of nuclear waste. The parliamentary secretary said that with the proper support, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited is confident it can solve the disposal problem. It has the proper support, Mr. Speaker, from the Government of Canada, but the government is not going to help them solve the disposal problem because it does not have the answers.

● (1740)

That is the fundamental question of our generation. It is a moral question, Mr. Speaker. Can we in this generation pass on to future generations an unsolved nuclear waste problem that may in fact destroy future generations and destroy the world? That is a fundamental moral question. For my part, I say no, we cannot, and some of my colleagues say no also.

Another problem that arises in the selling of the Candu reactors is whether those countries who buy them will live up to the safeguards. For example, India did not, and that is another problem.

To return to this matter of an inquiry, on May 1 of this year, as reported in *Hansard* at page 605, the hon. member for Saskatoon West (Mr. Hnatyshyn) asked about an inquiry, and referring to the Progressive Conservative government, he said this:

Our government initiated a national inquiry into domestic and international nuclear policy in Canada. Is it the intention of the Prime Minister to reconvene that national inquiry so that Canadians may have an input and there can be an assessment with respect to the direction of our national nuclear policy?

The parliamentary secretary then stood up and gave one of his solid answers, as follows:

Madam Speaker, there is no intention at the moment to begin a public inquiry of the type the hon. member has raised but, rather, to pursue an internal review as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources announced a few days ago.

At this point the hon. member for Saskatoon West asked a supplementary question, which reads as follows:

Will he be able to table as soon as possible the terms of reference with respect to an internal inquiry, and will the minister be in a position to let us know precisely the nature of that inquiry? Will the inquiry be open, and will the people of Canada have an opportunity to participate, whatever form it may take?

At this point, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) replied, and gave this answer:

Madam Speaker, I was involved in the discussions of this matter with the parliamentary secretary and the minister.

So it went right to the top level, to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister continued:

On behalf of the government, I would like to explain why we are not at this time organizing a public inquiry: it is because the time schedule for keeping our industry viable is very, very short.

We are now in danger of seeing the Canadian industry obsolete and lose its chance to sell in other countries of the world unless we make some quick decisions on some basic questions. It is in order to get these quick decisions that we in the government want to establish our own policy in a firm way.

There is no intention of preventing the Canadian public, concurrently or subsequently, from participating in various ways and expressing their views, but we cannot wait for a long inquiry to decide whether we stay in the game or get out of the game. That is the essence of the situation.

That is sort of like Alice in Wonderland, at the point where Alice was in Wonderland and the queen said, "Off with her head", to which Alice replied that she wanted a trial. But the queen said, "Off with her head first and then the trial". The quick decision is going to be over with, and it will have been taken.

I think the Prime Minister is making a big mistake in this area. Perhaps the Prime Minister wants to go down in Canadian history as one who has repatriated the constitution, in other words as the great constitutionalist. I predict that perhaps in 50 to 100 years from now historians are going to look back and say that is the man who ignored one of the most crucial issues of his time, the nuclear issue; by making an internal inquiry when the decision had already been made.

The big point today in this debate, and I thank the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) for raising the matter and smoking out the parliamentary secretary is that we got the terms of reference for the inquiry, and that was it. The inquiry is over, it is finished; we have had the trial, the head is off, and that is unacceptable.

Atomic Energy of Canada seems to feel that it is above participation, that it is above inquiry. If anyone wants to ask a question of Atomic Energy of Canada, any interested groups of citizens, we hear the reply that Atomic Energy of Canada will not participate, nor will it give us information. I wrote to Atomic Energy of Canada and asked how much it spent on public relations—a simple question. I suspect in the United States I would get an answer, or I could go to the Freedom of Information Act. But what did I get back? I received a snarky letter from a Hilary Pearson, parliamentary affairs officer. The letter reads:

In response to your request of May 1, 1980, for information concerning AECL public relations, please find attached the relevant figures for vote funded public affairs.

It would be appreciated if in future you would check the public accounts for the fiscal year in question prior to making a request for publicly available information.

That is typical of the attitude of the Atomic Energy of Canada. It thinks it is above everything; that it cannot be asked questions.

An hon. Member: They are just above you.

Mr. Waddell: Above me; I am a member of Parliament, like you. I would think that if you asked Atomic Energy of Canada, you would expect a reply. If it is above me, as the