

Government Orders

In the future we have to encourage private enterprise in Canada to do more and more R and D on its own. However government will always have a place in Canadian research and development. Certain areas of development would not take place if they were not started by the government itself. Then private enterprise moves in and there are spinoff industries and a bigger return.

Let me give one more example of something I certainly want members of the House to know. There are 690 hospitals across Canada. I doubt very much if there is a single member in this House who is not affected by the fact that those 690 hospitals are licensed by the Atomic Energy Control Board to receive medical radioisotopes for their hospitals for sterilization for example.

Where do we get medical radioisotopes? From a nuclear reactor. One thing the Tories did badly when they were in power was that they sold the radiochemical part of AECL to the company that eventually became Nordion International. The whole incident has resulted in a dispute between Nordion and Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. A facilitator is trying to put that together today.

Canada controls 88 per cent of the world's market in radioisotopes. The Americans heard that the former president of AECL had cancelled the Maple-X reactor which was in the process of being built. The Americans got into the act and hauled one of their old reactors out of Los Alamos. They tried to build it up so that they could produce medical radioisotopes.

• (1645)

One of the greatest contributions that can be made to Canada today is getting the medical radio isotope dispute settled quickly and getting on with the business of retaining the 88 per cent of world trade in radio isotopes. It has been a great contribution to medicine. A considerable amount of research into cancer and many other medical problems has been done by Atomic Energy of Canada Limited.

I wish the minister well in the administration of natural resources and those organizations that are attached to her department because the natural resources department means a great deal to the future of the country. We need research and development, new science and technology and a good management system for our natural resources. That means sustainable development.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake—Grain Transportation.

Mr. Bernard Deshaies (Abitibi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are presently on third reading of Bill C-48, which will unfortunately end up in the bill being passed as is by the Liberal majority in this House.

Relevant suggestions were made by my colleagues and myself at second reading to bring it more into line with the spirit of the Canadian Constitution, but our efforts have been in vain.

In committee, we tried again to have certain clauses of Bill C-48 changed, so that the leading role of the provinces with respect to natural resources would be recognized. But again, the Liberal majority systematically rejected any proposal along those lines.

Hon. members are well aware by now of all our reasons for not supporting this bill, but it is important to repeat what these are for the benefit of those who are watching the proceedings on television. The public must understand what this debate is really about and why the Bloc Quebecois is against Bill C-48, which is not flawed in its structure, but in its very essence.

On behalf of the people of Quebec, who have elected us to look after their interests, I would like to go over once again the reasons, albeit obvious, why we are asking that the bill, as it stands, be purely and simply withdrawn.

As my hon. colleague from Matapédia—Matane said earlier, anything having to do with natural resources is affected by this bill. The bill does not recognize the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces over natural resources and, therefore, is in contravention of Section 92(a) of the Constitution Act, 1867, which clearly states that mines and forest fall under exclusive provincial jurisdiction, and this was confirmed by the patriation of the Canadian Constitution in 1982.

Such interference maintains redundancy among all natural resources ministries and departments in this country, hence the risk of contradiction, duplication and overlap in many regards.

We must conclude that the federal government's lack of co-operation is not a healthy way to manage this country, because it does not look for ways to eliminate overlap and duplication at the Department of Natural Resources and is unwilling to recognize the provinces' predominance by staying in the background and letting the provinces design their own programs.

The issue of mining and the environment is a good example. Contrary to common sense, the federal government is set to proclaim the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and will soon table amendments to this 1992 act. It wants to create a Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency to replace the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office.

As usual, this environmental bill is not bad per se, but not bringing it into line with the various provincial programs will cause often unjustified delays because it will be cumbersome to