

Supply

later on in Question Period about reports this morning of a study done in New Brunswick on possible dangers that may exist at the Point Lepreau plant in New Brunswick. Apparently the Atomic Energy Control Board has issued warnings to New Brunswick Power which do not appear to have been taken seriously.

There has been concern about the Point Lepreau reactor going back some time. I can remember being in New Brunswick in 1987.

Mr. Merrithew: It is the most efficient in the world.

Mr. Blaikie: The Minister of Veterans Affairs who is from New Brunswick says it is the most efficient in the world.

Mr. Merrithew: It is.

Mr. Blaikie: It may well be. That is not the point. We could have a perfectly efficient nuclear power plant that is efficient right up until the day it melts down.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Blaikie: The minister says something about Greenpeace. I know for some people, if we just say the word Greenpeace, immediately the eyes close and the ears seal up. It may well be that there is a real problem here. I do not think the minister should simply write it off the way he has. Neither should New Brunswick Power.

Certainly the AECB should not write it off because, if this report is true, it has issued these memorandums of concern to New Brunswick Power. Unless the minister maintains that AECB has been infiltrated by Greenpeace, which is not something I would not want to maintain at this particular point, then it would seem to me the minister, as someone from New Brunswick, ought to take these warnings seriously and at the very least inquire as to their validity.

I recently had the opportunity to visit Pinawa, the Whiteshell nuclear research establishment, and to meet with the union people there. I have met with management before in another context. One of the things that I would like to put on the record is that if today as a country we were to decide that we were no longer going to pursue nuclear energy as an energy option, it would not mean that the Whiteshell nuclear research establishment or Chalk River or any of these other places would shut down. There would continue to be important work that would have to be done related to everything nuclear

that we have done so far. It is not a question of if the NDP were to implement its policy, everyone who has anything to do with the nuclear industry would automatically be out of work, or something like that.

• (1120)

We will continue to have to find out what to do with all the high level and low level radioactive waste that we have accumulated so far. That is a problem we will have for generations. Even if we had made a decision against nuclear energy yesterday, we would continue to have to devise decommissioning technologies for the reactors that we already have. We would continue exploring other ways of applying nuclear technologies, in medicine and a variety of other ways that may be appropriate, although not all of them will be. For instance, food irradiation I would not be in favour of, but there may be other appropriate applications of nuclear technology.

There are all these things, not to mention what we may feel called upon to do as a country with respect to the existing nuclear plants in the rest of the world which, whether we like it or not, are there and in the absence of some other alternative may need to be made less dangerous than they are.

There would be no shortage of work for a Canada that is committed to making its expertise available to a world that, quite frankly, still lives at the edge of the nuclear abyss, only it is not a weapons abyss any more. It is a reactor abyss, when you consider how many Chernobyls there are out there. I am not talking about Canadian reactors here, I am talking about reactors that exist mostly in the former Soviet Union and in eastern Europe about which there is a great deal of concern, and appropriate concern.

It seems to me that Canada could make a contribution there, short of being able in the short term to develop alternative energy sources for these countries, in helping to make sure that these reactors do not become one Chernobyl after another.

There is a lot of work for the nuclear industry to do in this country. We do not need a minister going around trying to market reactors and firing people who are not good at marketing them. We need a minister who is willing to put Canadian expertise at the disposal of the world to ensure that we do not have the kind of