

*Atomic Energy*

**Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** Mr. Speaker, the minister's statement has indicated that an agreement has been made for the exchange of information on atomic energy between France and Canada. Beyond that his statement was a nice lecture on the basics of our nuclear reactor power program, and for the life of me I could not see the purpose of most of it.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Aiken:** I felt that the minister was trying to build up a case for something, but the action never came. While the announcement itself may be very significant it was not expanded upon in any way by which we could understand what the agreement really is.

• (3:40 p.m.)

In view of our admitted superiority in water cooled, heavy water moderated reactors I am sure there will be a good deal of information passed from Canada to France. Presumably this is a business arrangement, but the statement leaves several things unanswered. First, what information will come from France to Canada in this exchange? France, apparently, has no technology in the field of heavy water moderated reactors. Second, are we in Canada considering a gas cooled type of reactor such as France has developed? The statement would seem to indicate that that is not the case. Third, what is the basis of payment for information we will provide to France? The statement has been made that there will be some adjustment. It seems most difficult to calculate what would be the basis of payment for such an exchange of information. We have sold 20 years of development research in the heavy water reactor field and it would seem to me to be very difficult to calculate a financial return. This is unexplained in the long statement the minister has made. A number of other things have been explained, but they did not go to the real meat of the issue.

Finally, I should like to know whether the government has some real prospect of selling natural uranium heavy water power units to France or is this merely a service to accompany our sales of uranium? To the extent that the exchange may improve our opportunity for sales of nuclear power units and the fuel for them we welcome the statement. If this exchange will assist in the development of peaceful uses for atomic energy it is also a useful step. However, no such objectives were set forth in the statement and we can merely

wait for an explanation concerning what exchange of information will develop and what prices will be paid for it.

**Mr. Ed Schreyer (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, what is strange about this ministerial statement is that although it is quite long it does not elaborate or define with any precision the nature of the agreement governing this exchange of information. It would seem that the greater part of the statement was given over to an explanation concerning the ways in which the Canadian nuclear power system is better in terms of cost and cost efficiency than the nuclear power systems of others countries. That would seem to be rather aside from the point in respect of the subject matter of which we are being asked to take note today.

I have two brief comments I should like to make in connection with the substance of this statement. The first is a comment of approval of what is being done. The other is a comment of disapproval. In a general way what the minister has announced today is a welcome development, not only in terms of its prospects with regard to the advancement of scientific knowledge in this field but also perhaps in terms of diplomatic relations between the two countries involved. This might enable both countries, without sacrificing any of the quality or quantity of their science research, to realize savings by avoiding in some way some duplication of effort.

I believe hon. members must bear in mind that over the past decade or more there has been some criticism voiced to the effect that Canada has been spending a disproportionate amount of time, effort and money on research in high energy physics. Any step we can take, without sacrificing the quality of this research, to minimize or reduce expenditures in this field should be welcomed.

The second element of the statement on which I wish to comment has to do with the reference to the fact that some monetary consideration is involved. There is a provision in the agreement for a payment by the atomic energy authority in France to our atomic energy commission. In this connection I should like to say that the fact that up until now there has been a non-availability of information relative to cost or financing as between Canada and other countries is a matter of regret. I noticed a few days ago that one of the metropolitan newspapers in this country commented editorially on the fact that members of this house were refused