

Adjournment Debate

Before Chernobyl we thought in terms of the possibilities of fighting a nuclear war or of fighting a conventional war. However, now with Chernobyl we realize that, with all the nuclear generating stations which represent potential obstacles spread throughout Europe and America, even a conventional war could create a nuclear war if something happened to one of the stations as it did with Chernobyl.

Given this situation it is understandable that Canadians should be most concerned about safety at nuclear generating stations, whether they are located in Canada or whether they are located anywhere else in the world, particularly if they are located outside Canada but nearby in the United States.

Recently, about four months ago, there were reports in the press of problems which were cropping up at a number of nuclear generating stations in the United States, particularly at the Perry I plant at North Perry, Ohio; at the Fermi II plant at Munroe, Michigan; and at the Davis-Besse generating station at Oak Harbour, Ohio. All these stations reported several unusual events during 1986 and 1987 which included failures or breakdowns of plant systems or procedures.

At the same time we had reassuring reports from the American Nuclear Regulatory Commission which indicated that everything was under control. They said that they had two inspectors on a full-time basis at every nuclear generating plant in the United States. Apparently there are about 109 of these nuclear generating stations.

However, in reality there were reports of problems with the inspection of the three plants in particular which caused concern among Canadians. There were reports that an official of the American Nuclear Regulatory Commission had warned the operators of a Louisiana nuclear plant that there would be a surprise inspection at the plant before it took place. There were reports as well that problems which were brought to the attention of the American Nuclear Regulatory Commission went uncorrected and undealt with. Indeed, there were reports and there is what has been described as a cosy relationship between the American Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the operators of these various nuclear generating stations.

● (1840)

All of this has caused great concern among Canadians. Organizations, including Energy Probe from Toronto, the Nuclear Awareness Project of Toronto, the Durham Nuclear Awareness of Oshawa and concerned citizens of Manitoba have all got together for the express purpose of trying to close down a number of these nuclear generating stations in the United States, 49 to be exact. They recognize, and Canadians recognize, that our Government has no control over these generating stations in the United States. At the same time, because they are so close to us and impact, on Canadians from where they draw their drinking water, particularly in the Great Lakes basin, there is a very serious concern about safety at those stations.

Some four months ago I asked the Parliamentary Secretary in this House if Canada had raised concerns with the United States Government and had made inquiries. The Parliamentary Secretary assured me at that time that Canada had expressed concern to the United States and was expecting reports concerning the situation. Four months have passed.

The Parliamentary Secretary is here tonight and I am looking forward to hearing from him that Canada is continuing to monitor the situation. I am looking forward to hearing what the results of the reports that we have received are, and I am looking forward to having him reassure me and all Canadians that our Government is doing everything possible within its power to ensure that the health and safety of Canadians in Canada is being protected by the Government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, on June 15, 1987, actually, I answered the question put by my friend from York-East (Mr. Redway) dealing with his concern about the overhauling of the Perry Nuclear Power Plant in Ohio.

At that time I commended him for his stand and especially for his concern because, as I stated at the time, after the Chernobyl incident the world would never be the same again.

I wish to commend him once again for his stand and especially for his concern, and that concern is widely shared by all Canadians. I stated at the time that the Department was very closely monitoring the situation and that he would be kept informed of the various developments with respect to that particular problem.

Every time that the Commission—the so-called *Nuclear Regulatory Commission*—has considered the problem over the last ten years, steps and corrections were taken.

But I understand my colleague's concern, because if there were measures, commissions, inquiries, perhaps it is because inevitably there are problems.

Therefore, the Hon. Member's concerns were made known to the Americans and very often, and I must add that at some point every week, there are discussions with our American colleagues about putting the Perry Station back into commission in the fall, and because of the proximity of the American border—hardly 50 kilometers away from the Canadian border—this is an urgent matter for all Canadian men and women.

● (1845)

External Affairs officials have discussed the problem and are monitoring the situation very closely. They have been assured that the Perry station will be given the green light only if it meets the safety standards established by the commission.

My colleague from York East (Mr. Redway) said a moment ago that it is true that we do not have any control. But in fact we do have some form of control. As long as Canadians like