

Private Members' Business

It has been studied in great detail. The toxicity of plutonium on a weight dose basis is much less than that of many items which are kept commonly around the home. It is lethal only if breathed into the lungs or directly injected into the bloodstream. Then it will kill you, and it will kill you quick, but not as quickly as botulism poison, for example, which is fairly abundant, and anthrax. Again, there are many natural toxins which are more toxic than this horrible stuff that we all have to worry about so much.

I see the Speaker starting to rise from his seat. I wish I could have spent some time on the technical aspects of this. As you have probably gathered I do have some knowledge of nuclear energy production. Perhaps another day.

Mr. David Iftody (Provencher, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-285 on behalf of the people of the Whiteshell facility in my riding of Provencher and to say that this bill would in effect eliminate Canada's nuclear industry.

The government believes that to do so would be fundamentally wrong. Not only has the nuclear industry provided a good return for investment to Canadians, and I will get into that later, it has achieved international acclaim. That recognition includes the recent Nobel prize to Dr. Bert Brockhouse for pioneering scientific work carried out at the Chalk River laboratories of AECL.

I would like to look at the myths and also address the facts of the Canadian nuclear industry. Nuclear energy supplies 15 per cent of Canada's nuclear electricity with a value of close to \$4 billion.

• (1905)

The hon. member for Kamloops stated earlier that the nuclear industry provides 4 per cent of Ontario's power. That is not true. The fact is the 22 reactors in Ontario provide 66 per cent of that power.

Direct employment in the nuclear sector is estimated at 30,000 jobs and at least 10,000 jobs in other sectors depend directly on the nuclear industry. Many of these jobs are highly skilled and knowledge based, the kind of jobs that are consistent and compatible with the new economy. They are the kind of jobs that we are trying to develop and encourage in Canada. Indeed in the last year we have created 437,000 of those kinds of jobs.

More than 150 companies across six provinces supply manufacturing and engineering products or services. In addition to those that we directly subcontract to, there are another 400 or 500 companies beyond that who subcontract to those 150 companies.

The recent sale of three Candus to Korea has generated more than \$1 billion in Canadian content, providing some 25,000 person-years of work over six years. The Korean Candu sale in

1992 was Canada's largest export order. It is well known to most Canadians and certainly to all those interested in the nuclear industry of the Prime Minister's most successful and recent trip to China where letters of undertaking were signed with the Chinese for two more reactors, estimated to bring back a total of \$4 billion worth of investment in Canada.

In 1991 the industry had a trade surplus of approximately \$500 million and that trend continues. Ontario Hydro estimates that from 1965 to 1989 the nuclear industry saved the Canadian economy \$17 billion in foreign exchange. Were we to have imported oil and coal, it would have cost the Canadian taxpayers another \$17 billion, to say nothing about the points addressed by my hon. colleague from Renfrew about the acid rain emissions and other kinds of global warming effects that would inevitably occur from burning these other kinds of fuels. For each year of the 1990s foreign exchange savings will amount to about \$1 billion.

The federal government has supported the development of Canada's nuclear energy capability. In the period between 1952 and 1994 the nuclear industry contributed at least \$23 billion to the gross domestic product. The federal government received \$700 million annually from the nuclear industry in the form of income and sales taxes.

I can tell you of a similar study to the one that Ernst & Whinney completed for the Government of Canada done in Manitoba which demonstrates clearly that the investment that the government makes in the facility close to where I live generates \$30 million of tax a year in the Manitoba economy alone.

The private sector also benefits. In the four years between 1988 and 1992 private sector companies that provide nuclear products and services had sales of almost \$10 billion. The performance of the research reactors has been the envy of the world. The performance of the Candu reactor is second to none.

Out of the 369 power reactors which provide significant amounts of electricity in 29 countries throughout the world there are four Candus in the top 10 in lifetime performance. As was pointed out earlier, the reactor at Point Lepreau, New Brunswick is number one. That is a formidable record.

With the kind of high-tech job-creation initiative that is inherent in the nuclear industry why the member for Kamloops would want to oppose that kind of job creation and that kind of record for Canadians and Canadian researchers.

Nuclear energy's contribution to electricity supply is not its only benefit to humankind. It also contributes to the quality of life. Its spinoff benefits to the environment and to medicine are equally significant. I refer to clause 5 of this bill where the member for Kamloops wants to keep isotope production but toss out everything else.