

Nuclear Proliferation

This faith that we Canadians gave to the Indian statements is shared by almost, I would even say all members of the delegation which also included Progressive Conservatives. A member of our delegation even said in a public speech—and to be charitable I will not mention his name, my colleagues who were with me are here to confirm it—that he understood the Indian government for having produced a nuclear explosion; he believed that India had no ambition to produce a nuclear bomb and that he wished—this Canadian delegate is a Progressive Conservative—that our negotiations and our agreements with India would continue.

So, the views of the members of this party on that subject are very different. They went to India and had the opportunity to study on the spot what the production of cheap energy represents for that country. We are not in a position to evaluate what it could represent for India as we are excessively wealthy when it comes to hydroelectric power and, traditionally, in some area of the country, we have always produced our electricity through other means than those at India's disposal. When a country like India depends almost exclusively on oil and coal to produce its electricity it is obvious then since 1973 this country is at grips with tremendous difficulties and the enormous costs that it might represent for India is certainly much more important than what it could represent for instance for the province of Nova Scotia that had to raise its sale tax by one cent effective Monday morning to compensate for the rising cost of oil used to produce electricity.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, I know that there could be some arguments about the moral issue whether or not Canada should decide if a nation should have its own nuclear bomb. I do not think we wish to play this part. We expressed it repeatedly to our parliamentary colleagues in India when we met them on this touchy subject. We told them it was not fair from some countries to make us play this part. We put trust in some countries as they accepted like us to sign a non-proliferation treaty.

Who will determine who can come into power, and who can obtain and produce a nuclear bomb, Mr. Speaker? I do not believe that the Canadian people would be interested. However, we cannot remain indifferent to the very great needs that are apparent when we visit the large country that India is.

Mr. Speaker, I said that I only wanted to attack the part of the motion of the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence) that concerns the continuation of our agreements with India. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that my speech will have succeeded in convincing some of my colleagues, those who did not have like me the opportunity to see for themselves the great sincerity of the Indian people and the threat with which these people, who are surrounded by hostile countries, have been living for so many years. I invite those who have not done so to read for instance the book entitled *Cette nuit la liberté* and to see with what mentality, with what philosophy the Indian people can accept the reluctance of people like ourselves, like Canadians, to resume an assistance program which is valuable for them, and which, in many cases, is essential for their survival, Mr. Speaker. Of course, there is no question of wanting to produce expensive nuclear devices, it is simply a matter—and I hope that I have succeeded in

[Mr. Dupras.]

convincing some of my colleagues of this—it is simply a matter of the wish to produce energy less expensively and as quickly as possible to continue the industrialization program which India introduced a few years ago and which is, in fact, very successful.

For my part, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the question of our agreement with India can be settled as quickly as possible and that our agreements can be continued.

● (1720)

[English]

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, today we are debating perhaps the most important subject ever raised on an opposition day. This government's attitude to its international responsibilities and continued nuclear assistance to India rank high on the list of moral decisions which the government must make and the people of Canada must accept or reject. I was amazed to hear the position of the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen), for whom I have great respect. Although many countries involved with nuclear technology and the production of nuclear materials and equipment are re-evaluating their positions, the minister apparently, despite his well-known sensitive, political antenna is not re-evaluating his position in considering domestic aspects and international responsibilities.

I was also surprised at what the minister said about safeguards and obligations under the non-proliferation treaty. Apparently he considers continued negotiations concerning treaty obligations as sacred as the Holy Writ. Certainly, his relating of obligations to the ultimate terms of the non-proliferation treaty is surprising. The minister no doubt recalls the evaluation of William Epstein, assistant director of the United Nations Disarmament Division, at the five-year review session on the non-proliferation treaty which took place last year. According to Mr. Epstein, the conference results were "poor" and confirmed the opinion of many non-signatory nations which observed the proceedings that signing the treaty was not worth it. Mr. Epstein said this to remind us of the dangers of proliferation and to show that the problem will not be solved merely by entering into new, extended treaties. The solution involves complex factors relating to the economic field, not just technical safeguards. The mere ratification of the treaty alone is not enough to ensure that India, for instance, or other countries receiving nuclear assistance will not again explode an atomic device.

The International Atomic Agency has indicated that by the year 2000 the annual rate of the world's plutonium production will be about one million kilograms, enough to make 100,000 nuclear explosive devices. Needless to say, Canada's contribution to this potential is significant and disturbing. At present, 30 countries are capable of producing nuclear materials which can be used for weapons. By 1985 it is said that 50 countries will possess at least one nuclear plant capable of producing plutonium for weapons.

We must face the fact that an increasing number of nations of various political stripes and of varying responsibility will acquire the capability of producing nuclear material. Not all of it will be used for the production of electrical energy. We must also consider the increasingly large stockpiles of radioactive wastes in the world. These