

We know that the major problem with nuclear products is the concern of the public. It does not matter how good the technology is or how acceptable the product is, if we continually have to deal with apprehension by the public the nuclear industry in Canada is going to be inhibited, it is going to be a problem for government and is going to be a problem for the country. We must have the technology necessary to assure that irradiated food is brought within the realm of acceptance of the Canadian public, not through jingles or through public indoctrination but through fact and acceptance through the normal channels.

Canada and Nordion are so far ahead of the rest of the world in this technology that if we sell Nordion and its irradiated food technology, a private company could get its money back without doing any further research in this field. It could absolutely milk the technology for which the citizens of this country have paid over the last 37 years and we would be the losers. The world would be the loser. The countries where spoilage and bacteria of food supplies are a problem would be the losers. The Third World would be a very severe loser. We are playing with benefits which will come ultimately not only to Canada but to all mankind. If we can develop this technology it will be a source of tranquility for the world in general.

If there is no further technology, we will not have that assurance and we will also lose the edge that Canada has in this very important technology. Most important, we are playing with the health of Canadians and all citizens of the world. These are health-related companies. There is nothing that says we have to abandon every Crown corporation we ever had. There has to be some logic, some responsibility when dealing with the privatization of Crown corporations. Surely to heavens, companies that deal in products which affect the health of Canadians and people throughout the world must be kept under the federal umbrella to ensure that the technology dealt with is brought to a stage acceptable to Canadians.

The Government says that it handed out irradiated cookies to children and they could not taste the difference. What kind of an experiment is that? What kind of an assurance is that? If those parents knew that their children were eating those irradiated cookies there would be one heck of an outcry. The Government has not been able to say which children ate those irradiated cookies, but that is not the way in which the Government

Nordion and Theratronics

of Canada is going to be able to sell irradiated food to this country.

It is vital that the Government keep this technology within the framework of a Crown corporation or agency so that it can maintain the development, so that this technology will not be aborted and will not be commercialized by a private company in order to make a fast profit, thereby scaring the rest of the world and making this technology forever taboo. This is vital, Mr. Speaker. It is absolutely vital that the Government maintain the technology.

We have been told that the Government cannot retain the technology in Nordion because Nordion is under AECL and you know how long it takes for AECL to make any decisions. Well, it is the Government that takes the time in making decisions. If the Government wanted to make decisions more quickly with respect to Nordion and Theratronics, it could do so through its own actions. It does not have to pass any legislation, it does not have to coerce the business community, it does not have to frighten the Canadian public, it can do it through its own operations, its own management facilities, through a more efficient administration. It does not need to get rid of the company.

Some say that if the private sector is involved in Nordion we have a better chance to raise capital. Who is going to give the capital to AECL to replace the money it is losing if Nordion and Theratronics are privatized? The Government says that it wants a healthy nuclear industry in which the people of Canada have confidence. It is doing the opposite by privatizing these two very important and very lucrative Crown corporations.

I ask the Government to reconsider the privatization of these two corporations. I hope that second reading will be all we will be able to attain before we adjourn for the summer in order to give the Government the opportunity to rethink what I think would be a very serious mistake, that being the privatization of Nordion and Theratronics.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question? The Hon. Member for Renfrew (Mr. Hopkins).

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew): Mr. Speaker, the Bill before us today is obviously one on which the Government wants fast passage. I was afraid for a moment that you were not going to recognize me out of the corner of your eye. I consider this Bill on radio-medical isotopes and Theratronics International dealing with cancer research to be one of the most important Bills that we will