

also is copper, zinc, lead, silver and iron ore, just to name a few.

With the exception of cement, Canada exports the major portion of its mining output, and must accept world market prices. Stockpiling not only upsets this world market even more, it is outrageously expensive. When markets recover it is very difficult to dispose of stockpiles.

Estimates have been made on a case-by-case basis of the costs of bringing operations that are temporarily closed back into production, but time does not allow a detailed examination of those here. Let it suffice to say that for a nickel stockpiling program alone, which would stockpile the difference between the amount of nickel produced in Canada in 1982, and 1981, which were not banner years for that industry, it would cost the Canadian taxpayers about half a billion dollars, using a nickel price which would only cover the producer's operating costs. This does not include those mines still open, but operating at a loss, who might also want assistance, particularly as their losses would be aggravated by the depressing effect of increased inventories. That is not to say that this Government does not care about the people in the Sudbury basin.

The Hon. Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Chrétien) has been meeting regularly with all levels of Governments, with the unions and the companies, to come up with some creative solutions to this very disturbing unemployment situation. It ought to be mentioned that the Minister of State for Mines (Mrs. Erola) has been actively pursuing creative solutions to rectify a very, very difficult situation caused primarily by a world economic recession.

• (2220)

ATOMIC ENERGY OF CANADA LIMITED FUTURE OF NOVA SCOTIA HEAVY WATER PLANTS. (B) POLICY ON SALES TO INDIA

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, let me begin my remarks by pointing out to the House that Atomic Energy of Canada Limited operates in the Province of Nova Scotia two heavy water plants respectively located at Glace Bay and at Port Hswkesbury in the Strait of Canso. These two heavy water plants have been in operation for several years and employ jointly over 700 persons directly, and probably another 2,000 persons indirectly. Therefore, any cessation of the operation of these heavy water plants would result in a loss of jobs in the area of 3,000 persons in the Cape Breton area of Nova Scotia.

I would point out that that area of Cape Breton now has an unemployment rate of approximately 19.5 per cent. There is no question that if the operation of these heavy water plants in Cape Breton was endangered and if they were to cease operation, there would be a very serious problem created on top of the existing serious unemployment problem in the Island of Cape Breton which would affect the economy of the whole of Nova Scotia.

With that in mind, on November 3, 1982 I rose in the House of Commons and asked the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Chrétien), and subsequently the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), what action might be taken to ensure the

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continued operation of these heavy water plants by Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. On that day I was not successful in obtaining a clear and careful answer to my inquiry. Although the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources did indicate there was a serious problem with the marketing of the Candu reactor both in domestic and international terms and the failure to sell Candu reactors domestically and internationally would mean there was no market for the heavy water to fuel these plants.

Given the problem with the Candu reactor program, in that it has been unsuccessful, I still want to ask the Government what it proposes to do in the face of this horrendous problem in Cape Breton Island and across the Province of Nova Scotia. What in a word is the solution?

I do not believe, and I am sure my colleague from Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. Dingwall) does not believe the economy of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia can withstand this tremendous amount of unemployment which, beyond the persons immediately affected, would have a disastrous effect on the operation of the power plants that are related to the operation of the heavy water plants at Glace Bay and Port Hawkesbury. In addition, there is a vast amount of coal produced in connection with these operations that would be left without a market, as well as the effect on the miners who engage in that operation.

In search of a solution the employees of the heavy water plants have made the suggestion that the Government should consider the construction of three 600-megawatt Candu reactors in Canada to be related to other energy projects. They point out in graphic terms that this could be of great assistance to the energy industry across Canada because the reactors could be used to fuel and assist broader energy projects.

Those employees of the heavy water plants pointed out in very clear terms that the economic activity generated by the operation of the heavy water plants is a very serious concern because they pump a vast amount of money into the economy. In fact, it was indicated by Atomic Energy of Canada that the cost to that organization of operating the heavy water plants is in excess of \$120 million per year.

One wonders what the obligation is of the Government of Canada in this situation. Let me refer to a remark by the Prime Minister made in June of this year when the unemployment rate had risen to 10.8 per cent. He said it is scaring hell out of the people. We now have an unemployment rate two points higher and the Prime Minister is saying that the worst times can be the best. That is the word from the Prime Minister of Canada to the working people of Glace Bay and of the Strait of Canso, that the worst times can be the best. We want more than words of that kind from the Prime Minister of Canada. The people need action, concrete proposals to meet those problems.

• (2225)

The Government ought to consider the suggestion made by the workers in heavy water plants, and determine whether the