

*Oral Questions*

the motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** Having heard the terms of the motion, is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

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## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

### EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

#### GOVERNMENT POSITION ON WHETHER ARGENTINA PROHIBITED FROM REPROCESSING SPENT FUEL FROM CANDU REACTOR

**Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs and arises from an answer he gave on July 6 to my colleague, the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham, in which he indicated that the present safeguard agreement between Argentina and Canada precludes the possibility of Canada taking steps to prevent Argentina from reprocessing spent fuel from the CANDU reactor into pure plutonium. In light of that assertion I should like to draw his attention to Article III paragraph 3 of the Argentina safeguard agreement which states in part:

Nuclear material referred to shall be reprocessed . . . only as may be mutually agreed between the two Parties—

I ask specifically whether this gives Canada an interest and whether Argentina can produce plutonium from the CANDU reactor?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I believe the quotation the hon. member read supports the answer I gave to that hon. member earlier. I will be happy to look at the text again, and if I have made a mistake I will be ready to acknowledge it.

**Mr. Gillies:** Mr. Speaker, I raise the question because I think the answer given on July 6 is far from clear. I would ask the minister specifically whether under the safeguard agreement Canada has the right to say to Argentina that it cannot in fact reprocess this, and that Canada is a participant in that decision-making process with the Argentina government?

**Mr. MacEachen:** Mr. Speaker, I think the words of the agreement justify that conclusion.

**Mr. Gillies:** In view of press reports and so on which indicate that Argentina does not have that same interpretation, has Canada communicated and made it clear to the government of Argentina that in fact that government cannot reprocess plutonium from the CANDU reactor without the agreement of Canada?

[Mr. Speaker.]

**Mr. MacEachen:** Mr. Speaker, this particular agreement was very closely negotiated over quite a period of time, and I am sure that the Canadian negotiators have made every term abundantly clear to the Argentina side. In respect of this point, which is a very important one, I will again read the agreement to make sure there is no confusion whatsoever. I will do so because it is a vital point.

#### INQUIRY WHETHER NOTICE RECEIVED ARGENTINA INTENDS TO ESTABLISH PLANT TO PRODUCE PLUTONIUM

**Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham):** Mr. Speaker, has the government, this particular minister or his department received any notice as yet from Argentina that it intends to build a reprocessing plant for the reprocessing of pure plutonium in Argentina? Have you received that notice, have you received information, or have you not received it?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I have not personally received any such information.

#### POSSIBLE OBLIGATION TO SUPPLY HEAVY WATER TO ARGENTINA—EFFECT ON DOMESTIC NUCLEAR GENERATING CAPACITY

**Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham):** In view of the impending shortages in the heavy water supply predicted by many authoritative sources in the nuclear industry, including close advisers to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, can the minister tell the House whether the agreement with Argentina calls for Canada to supply heavy water for the Cordoba reactor and, if so, does it mean that there will have to be a curtailment of the Canadian domestic generating capacity simply because we will not have the capacity to produce heavy water for both Argentina and our own needs?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** I have no recollection that any such obligation is included in the safeguards agreement.

**Mr. Lawrence:** Did the minister and his advisers consider when the Cordoba agreement was being negotiated, just what the future situation of the heavy water supply will be because there may well be a supply going to Argentina from Canada for this purpose? Does it mean that Canada's own domestic requirement will have to be cut back?

**Mr. MacEachen:** I will check on this factual point as to whether there is any obligation to provide heavy water to Argentina. I know of no such obligation included in the safeguards agreement. My colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, may have some other commercial arrangements upon which I would like to check before making a categorical disclaimer that there is any obligation whatsoever. I do not believe there is any such obligation, but I would like to recheck with the minister.