

Nuclear Power

up with a technological fix which does not do more harm than good.

The truth is that we have not really tried conservation. The truth is that we have not really tried to develop renewable energy resources. The truth is that we have not really considered many of the options now before us, the soft energy paths, etc. We have not really tried individually or collectively to rethink our lives in the light of what we know about our ability to pollute and deplete a finite world. Thus, we are now taking many of the risks which we take as a society, not out of necessity and not because our backs are to the wall, but for no other reason than our own convenience and our own reluctance to drive smaller cars or to do whatever combination of things would be necessary to give, in a real way, the conserver society, as some people have called it, a try.

We are not faced with freezing in the dark. If we had tried all these other routes and still we faced energy shortages, then maybe we would need to contemplate nuclear power, but we have not done this.

I believe what we do about nuclear power will be powerfully symbolic for the western world. I speak here not just in the context of Canada but in the context of the western industrialized world. Not going ahead or stopping nuclear power at its present stage of growth will indicate that we are prepared, as a civilization, to repent of our headlong drive toward increasingly meaningless consumption—

Mr. Siddon: Hands folded.

Mr. Blaikie: —at the expense of the future, nature, and those parts of the world which we keep as our economic hinterland at the point of a gun.

Mr. Siddon: What are you going to burn, leaves?

Mr. Blaikie: I notice that the party which is so self-righteous and exuberant about getting God into the Constitution is becoming giddy at the language of repentance. I notice that the language of repentance bothers the same party which is concerned about God. Perhaps the people of Canada should take notice of that.

Going ahead with nuclear power will mean that we have given up on ourselves, given up on our ability to reshape the human community instead of continuing to bend heaven and earth to the false priorities of industrial civilization.

Mr. Kempling: Down on your knees.

Mr. Blaikie: Many in my party feel the same way as I do. Accordingly, we regret that the government of Saskatchewan has chosen to embrace so actively the mining of uranium in northern Saskatchewan. In the well-intentioned passion for creating wealth which may be used for the benefit of all the people of Saskatchewan they have made a Faustian bargain which, if it is not soon cancelled, will cost them their souls. But at least they have souls to lose. Others proceed with no pangs of conscience whatever. Nevertheless, I mentioned Saskatchewan so as not to appear naive or self-righteous in any partisan

sense. I do believe, however that it is only within a truly democratic socialist economy that the environment can be protected and people done justice. Because justice and survival, in the final analysis, can go together, we do not have to pick between justice and survival, and it is to the posing of these kinds of questions to an informed Canadian public that this bill is dedicated.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy MacLaren (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, in the discussion today of nuclear matters I want to say a word first about the success of the development of the Candu reactor here in Canada. It has been a remarkable technological achievement on the part of Canadian scientists, engineers and industry. Indeed, by 1979, nuclear reactors were generating one-third of the electricity here in the Province of Ontario, with a total value of something over \$1 billion. I cite that as an indication of the success of the Candu reactor, a largely indigenous system for generating electricity which makes use of abundant Canadian resources and is a unique Canadian technology.

Second, of course, the Candu reactor is economically competitive with coal-fired generation in large parts of the country, especially east of Manitoba.

Third, the technical performance of the Candu reactor has been outstanding. For example, statistics show that four Candu reactors were more reliable than any of the 110 large power reactors in the world today. In terms of lifetime gross operating factors, six of the world's top seven reactors in 1979 were Candu units operated by Ontario Hydro.

The bill before us today would eliminate exports of nuclear plants. If Canada were to adopt such a position and if other supplier countries were to follow our lead, we would be forcing on the rest of the world our judgment that they do not need nuclear technology. Many countries are facing rapidly worsening economic conditions because of the high cost of oil. Many of them simply do not have hydro electricity or coal as a viable option, and many of them are desperately short of the energy they need to raise their living standards to levels we would consider to be minimally acceptable.

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It is true that many such countries have too small an electrical system to be able to use nuclear power, but if we refuse to sell to those who can use it we allow the world pressures on available oil supplies to increase and to make those supplies less available and more costly to countries with no other intermediate term energy options. Denying a country the energy sources it perceives it needs is not a step toward encouraging world peace. It is prudent to be careful in selecting which countries we shall sell to, assuring ourselves that they have only peaceful motives. It is not prudent to refuse to export one of the superior energy options in the world today to any foreign country under any conditions.

At home, export sales complement our domestic nuclear program. They permit economies of scale and the spreading of