

Eldorado Nuclear Limited

because of the special nature of the nuclear industry with regard to defence, as it affects the environment, as it affects future generations of people, and as it affects the over-all future economy of Canada.

For these reasons I recommend that the House support the hoist motion of the Hon. Member for Regina West. We should delay action on the Bill at this time until we have had an opportunity for further study, so that the full impact and the full implications of this proposal can be more correctly analysed.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Hon. Member for Humboldt—Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse) on a very thoughtful speech. I notice that, with very short notice, he is able to give a thoughtful and cogent analysis.

I want to ask him a question about Saskatchewan. Perhaps he could tell us a little more about environmental problems and the history of Crown corporations in Saskatchewan. My colleague will know that there are some measures in the Bill respecting the liabilities of Eldorado Nuclear. The Government is selling this Crown corporation, but usually when one sells a company one sells the liabilities and the assets. The Government is not selling all the liabilities in this company. The big liability is for environmental clean-up. It is estimated there are something like 1,200,000 tonnes of low-level nuclear waste around the Port Hope area. As you might know, Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party has an inquiry going on into the nuclear industry. The Government would not institute one, so we did. We visited the Port Hope area and heard from the local people. There is a big problem with respect to cleaning up what we call low-level nuclear waste. It is not the high-level nuclear waste from the hydro nuclear plants, but low-level waste from the production of uranium. I think this low-level waste is also a problem in Saskatchewan.

• (1130)

I want to ask the Hon. Member, since Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation is involved in this sale of the Crown corporation, if he could tell us something about some of the problems in his own Province of Saskatchewan with respect to the liability of low-level nuclear waste and the failure to clean this up and the kind of costs that would be involved in cleaning it up.

I will remind the Hon. Member that 25 per cent of any cost over \$2 million, up to \$100 million, will be paid by the company that buys Eldorado Nuclear, which could be Denison Mines, and we all know of its record with respect to safety and the environment. It is bad. Seventy-five per cent of any costs will still be retained by the Government of Canada. Over \$100 million, it is 100 per cent. Would the Hon. Member tell us whether there are low-level nuclear wastes in his own Province of Saskatchewan? Saskatchewan was the home of Crown corporations, and it has used Crown corporations in a very Canadian way in helping people develop their own province.

Perhaps the Hon. Member could say something about that as well.

Mr. Althouse: I can, in the short time I have, tell the Hon. Member a little about some of the projects that exist in Saskatchewan. As the House will know, there a number of mines operating there. One of them was a mine owned by Eldorado Nuclear at Uranium City which, in the last five or six years, closed, resulting in the virtual closing of the town. It also resulted in some of the \$550 million debt the Crown corporation is now carrying because there were substantial improvements made to the tunnelling in the mines. After expending these moneys the ore ran out very shortly thereafter, so it was a bad management decision by the operators of the mines at Uranium City which were owned by Eldorado Nuclear.

With regard to the Saskatchewan mines, a number of them have been approved for development. Deposits of very high-grade uranium ore, by far the highest grade of ore in the world are under the northern lights in Saskatchewan. As I understand it, because of the process required for SMDC to control those mines, to meet the environmental needs, it has in many cases formed alliances with other developers, but SMDC still controls the operation. SMDC is a Crown corporation.

I understand a number of the projects were opened up by the process of draining a lake. The ore was mined using virtually a pit process. The tailings such as exist are kept on the site. When the mine is played out a long time from now, my understanding is that the lake will go back into place and the water will keep the radiation at bay, serving the same function it has served for millions of years before the opening of the mines. The tailings will not have the same radiation value as the ore, so we ordinary people accept advice of the experts and presume that that will keep the radiation at bay with no environmental problems.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I have sat here very patiently. This is the fourth day of debate on a government proposed initiative to combine two companies in the uranium business, one owned by the Government of Saskatchewan and one owned by the federal Government, into a larger, more efficient company, with better quality jobs—

Mr. Waddell: You assume that.

Mr. Hawkes: —better marketing potential—

Mr. Benjamin: Where?

Mr. Hawkes: Members of the NDP say we assume that. We do not have to make an assumption. We know from the past history of this Party that every time this Government moves to privatize, on ideological grounds the NDP says jobs are at risk, all these awful things are going to happen. In every single case, from de Havilland on through the system, when we privatize, we create better marketing—

Mr. Waddell: Why?