

Environment

I support the suggestion of the hon. member for Grenville Carleton with regard to this industry, Mr. Speaker. In the past, the difficulty with health and safety research has been its fragmentation between various governments, departments and agencies such as the Atomic Energy Control Board, Atomic Energy (Canda) Limited, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Department of National Health and Welfare and others. At the Provincial level research has been done by the department of health and the ministry of natural resources. Industry has also carried out some research. What we envisage is an independent research center with people drawn from both levels of government, from industry and labour.

The government, through the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, has undertaken to provide \$500,000 per year for the operation of the occupational and environmental research centre and there is some indication that the five underground uranium mining companies will match this. The federal commitment was made on the basis that the province of Ontario would provide an equal amount, but although the request was made in the spring of 1977 and the provincial government said it would indicate its intention by the fall, no support has been forthcoming. The project is thus delayed even though the initial stage is complete.

I think this institute is vital to carry out research and development for the safe expansion of the uranium industry in Canada. It should study community and environmental hazards, disposal of waste from the milling operation, occurrence of natural uranium within town sites and such problems.

The institute I have been speaking of could be very important to the health and safety not only of uranium miners but to people in the communities related to the production of uranium in Ontario and Saskatchewan, as well as in other provinces where it will be found in the future. The mines will expand from the production of a few thousand tons of yellowcake today to about 10,000 tons within eight to ten years. This kind of research facility could ensure that we will be able to cope with the problems of rapid expansion in the industry in Ontario and western Canada and, indeed, throughout the world. Each area of the world has different problems. Australia's problems, for instance, are not the same as those in Ontario, and Ontario's problems of deep underground mining are different from those of Saskatchewan with open pit mining.

Mr. Frank Maine (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity to talk out this motion. While one cannot but applaud the good intentions attending this motion, one is moved to question the wisdom of creating yet another agency to study environmental questions of the kind raised in the motion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the hour allotted to the consideration of

[Mr. Foster.]

private members' business has expired. I do now leave the Chair until eight o'clock tonight.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

NORTHERN PIPELINE ACT

ESTABLISHMENT OF AGENCY TO SUPERVISE PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. MacEachen that Bill C-25, to establish the Northern Pipeline Agency, to facilitate the planning and construction of a pipeline for the transmission of natural gas from Alaska and northern Canada, and to give effect to an agreement between Canada and the United States of America on principles applicable to such a pipeline and to amend certain acts in relation thereto, be read the second time and referred to the special committee on a northern gas pipeline.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, when I was speaking at the adjournment I called it five o'clock a minute or two early to enable the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) to have a nap, because he seemed to require some rest. I think he has slept in because I do not see him here now.

I regret that, although the spokesman on the issue for the NDP undoubtedly is here, the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas). As he usually does, he listens with judicious attention to what I have to contribute to these debates, as I do him. It would be my hope that what I have said thus far will convince him to convince in turn the members of his party that any attempt to delay the passage of this beneficial legislation in the best Canadian interests will be avoided here on second reading and in committee.

I want to draw to the attention of members that are here in such unfortunately small numbers—I could say the more important members are here—that before the drastic changes in the rules and the electronic conversion of this place to a very unexciting forensic forum a debate such as this would command the attention of two-thirds of the members of the House at least. There are not that many members attending committee meetings tonight who could not be here, and with legislation of this magnitude, it is rather shameful that members could not be present in greater numbers than they are tonight.

Again I castigate the government, if the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) would just pay attention for a moment. I have already drawn attention to the fact that the bill itself was in possession of members of the public before it