

Eldorado Nuclear Limited

in the areas where this product is mined and processed. Would she elaborate a little more on the important and dangerous aspects of this particular industry?

Ms. McDonald: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to respond to both very important and complex questions. To begin with respect to the military question, I think the hypocrisy of the Canadian Government is particularly disturbing. It is not just this Government, but previous Liberal Governments also. We are supposedly a non-nuclear country, a nuclear weapons-free country, yet we participate in the production of the major necessary element for nuclear weapons.

Throughout the 1950s massive amounts of our uranium went into the American nuclear weapons stockpile. Fortunately, those weapons have not been used, but they are stockpiled and they contain our uranium. Who knows if they will be used, and we participated in their production.

We supported the non-proliferation treaty. We were a signatory to that treaty. However, we have allowed the export of our Candu reactors and our uranium, so we have some responsibility for the reprocessed uranium from reactors for subsequent military purposes. It was not intended in the first place, but that is what happened. Canada has not been careful enough in ensuring that it would not happen.

Military uses and the so-called peaceful uses of this power are intertwined. When military uses of nuclear power became so horrendous to people, the nuclear industry realized it could not survive without a respectable front. So we had hope, and perhaps for some people it was a very genuine hope, that there would be the peaceful atom and peaceful uses. Indeed, a nuclear future could help as an energy source for Third World countries. All kinds of idealistic aims were given for the development of the nuclear industry. But I think we should look behind this front. It is a very pious front, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The industry needs both. In order to do the production for military uses, it has to have the pretence that it is going into peaceful uses.

Both France and the United States, where our uranium is enriched for some reactors, process uranium for both peaceful and military purposes. They do it at the same place. We have this fiction that our uranium is being processed only for peaceful uses and this kind of mythological accounting system that our uranium goes in and the enriched uranium that goes out for military uses did not come from our uranium. Perhaps it came from someone else's uranium that was sent to the same processing facility. So the Government convinces itself that it is really not Canadian uranium which is going into those atmospheric tests in France or into even more nuclear weapons in the United States. I think we should be disillusioned with this idea.

The question of occupational health and safety is a very complex one. I know other Members have dealt with it in their remarks so I will just say very briefly that we do not have adequate safeguards at all. Miners have considerably higher

risks of lung cancer from exposure to radiation at the workplace. Accident rates are very high.

Occupational health and safety is an extremely important matter. Perhaps with better technology these risks could be reduced somewhat, but I do not believe anyone could be so naive as to suggest that this will ever be a safe industry, a really desirable industry, one in which people can look forward to working under healthy and safe working conditions. It is always going to be a highly risky industry. That is another reason why I would much prefer to see the development of renewable sources of energy that will not be harmful to health and which will be less capital intensive for the number of jobs produced and which will result in the creation of even more jobs. We need to have a switch over. We need to develop those alternatives. We need to provide safe and healthy jobs for people. Certainly uranium mining and processing is not a place where we find these things.

Mr. Skelly: Madam Speaker, I have another small question which I think is of critical importance to this particular debate. From my perspective and from the perspective of many people in this House and in this country, the nuclear energy question is a critical one. People justifiably fear it. They know of the dangers and disasters which have occurred. I want to call to the attention of the House the complete absence of the Liberal Party. There is not a Liberal Member sitting in this House, and there has been absolutely no demonstration of concern for the issue. I think the Liberal Party when it was in Government was one of the most profound malefactors on this issue—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I will interrupt the Hon. Member and remind him of something he does know, I am sure. It is not proper in this House to mention the absence of Hon. Members who may be detained elsewhere. I know the Hon. Member knows that quite well. There is one minute left in the question and comment period, if the Hon. Member for Broadview—Greenwood (Ms. McDonald) cares to answer.

Ms. McDonald: Madam Speaker, without referring to their presence or absence in the House, I can certainly refer to their position on the debate. Their position has been wholly unsatisfactory. The Liberals have been in Government for most of this period and they have ignored the health and safety questions. They have turned a blind eye to the military uses of nuclear energy. They have spoken pious words about proliferation but have not done anything to ensure it does not happen. They talk in the environment committee about soft energy paths and say pious things there, but they have not dealt with the really tough questions of research and development, and developing alternative sources of energy so we would not be dependent on a source of energy that is killing people in increasingly larger numbers.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The time for questions and comments is now over.