

Uranium Contract with U.K.

In the latter part of his announcement the Prime Minister referred to the fact we can look forward in the future to an increased demand for uranium on world markets. As producers of uranium we in Canada have to give consideration to the use to which this uranium will be put. As the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam has mentioned, if this uranium is going to be used for peaceful purposes we can look forward to other orders of this kind, not only for Rio Algom mine but for mines in other areas of Canada. Exports of this nature, of course, will have a favourable effect on our economy. We must emphasize the peaceful uses of uranium because we must remember that the same product can also be used for the destruction of the world.

It is the responsibility of the government before any contract is signed to make certain the uranium will be used for peaceful purposes and for advancement in fields of endeavour that will ensure a better living standard for nations of the world. Since I come from a mining district I can appreciate the hardship that results from the closing of a mine. I can appreciate what happens to those people who are left without jobs. I think the Prime Minister has had this in mind and we can be grateful to him for that. As the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam has said, there are going to be further contracts in the future because there will be an increased demand for this product in world markets. I think the Prime Minister would do well to keep in mind giving other districts an opportunity to share in these contracts to as great an extent as possible. The government should keep an eye on the movements of this product to ensure that they not only help the Canadian economy but help people all over the world.

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): It would be redundant at this point, Mr. Speaker, to say more than that we express our satisfaction at the announcement which has been made concerning the export of uranium to Great Britain. I am sure the remarks the Prime Minister has made will be greeted with particular satisfaction by the people of Elliot Lake and the other constituents of Algoma East. I am certain they are grateful to their member of parliament for his role in making such an event possible. I believe that this announcement tonight points up the fact that we are immensely rich in natural resources. If we can just put our own economy in sound shape, and not only export such natural resources as uranium but also develop within

Canada processes such as that requiring heavy water for the nuclear reactors that Canada is building all over the world, this will augur well for Canada. If we can make certain that our own economy is in a position to develop these resources and that our government has the ability to conclude these trade agreements, then these resources will benefit not only Canadians but people all over the world.

Mr. R. A. Webb (Hastings-Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians will be very happy to learn of the Prime Minister's announcement tonight.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I recognize the interest of the hon. member but the usual practice in the house is for statements to be made by representatives of the different parties.

Mr. Starr: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Prime Minister and all members would agree that the hon. member who has just risen has a very vital interest in this matter because of the fact that uranium mining is an industry in his riding. I hope the house will agree to allow him to say a few words on this matter.

Mr. Webb: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am certain all Canadians will be happy to learn—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I apologize for interrupting the hon. member again, but if the hon. member is to speak I hope it is by unanimous consent. I refer hon. members to standing order 15.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Webb: I am certain all Canadians will be very happy to learn of the announcement made by the Prime Minister tonight. However, in spite of the numerous promises made by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Industry to the people and the many delegations from the Bancroft area who have visited Ottawa that they would be given every consideration—

Mr. Pearson: And they were.

Mr. Webb: —if any new contracts were signed, the fact is that the present government has closed the uranium mine in the Bancroft area resulting in economic problems for the people there. Mr. Speaker, I plead with the Prime Minister and the government to reconsider the allocation of these contracts and share them with the people of Bancroft and the area.