

With respect to any changes that would have to occur, obviously safety as well as technological and project management would have to be put into Canadian hands in order to meet the safety obligations that we have.

• (1500)

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, knowing the desperation of the nuclear industry in Canada and knowing that it has a strong ally in the minister, I do not expect the government to be as rigorous as we would like it to be in making this decision.

The minister mentioned that Romania paid its debts on this account. It is no wonder it could pay its debts; the site was a forced labour camp and nobody in AECL managed to notice this. If, God forbid, they should go ahead with this project, would the minister please ensure that he sends people to Romania who have their eyes open and who are not so committed to the sale of Candu reactors that they do not notice over a period of years that the place is a forced labour camp, something which was attested to time and again in front of the external affairs committee and by others? Would he promise to send people there who are not so tied to the nuclear industry that they cannot see what is going on right in front of their faces?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, along with Canada's international responsibility to the non-proliferation treaty, my obligation is to advance energy, including nuclear energy.

I point out to the hon. member that the province of Ontario has well over 50 per cent of its electrical generation in nuclear right now. It is moving toward 60 per cent when its present construction is completed. The point, I say to the hon. member, is that it is my responsibility to look at all energy forms rather than the biases that he, so often over the years while he and I have been in the House, has expressed.

At the present time, since the fall of the Ceausescu regime there are no military conscripts on site. I appreciate what he said in terms of other people working on the site during the Ceausescu regime. It is for those reasons that we are demanding certain changes, keeping in mind that there will be an election on May 20 and hopefully democracy will be restored to that country.

Privilege

PRIVILEGE

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Speaker: I should advise the House that I have a question of privilege from the hon. member for Skeena. Before the hon. member pleads his case, I want to suggest an approach to this matter which I think would be helpful.

First, I compliment the hon. member on having given to me in very great detail the sum and substance of his position. I want to let the hon. member know that I have looked at the material very carefully. I am not at this time ruling as to whether it is a question of privilege, but I must indicate to the hon. member that there is some doubt about that.

However, in the hon. member's letter supporting his question of privilege, he makes a serious argument that there was an intention to mislead as a consequence of contradictions in statements made by the hon. Minister of the Environment and material put forward by the hon. minister's department.

What I would ask the hon. member to co-operate with is my suggestion that this matter be adjourned until the minister gets back. I will take the information that I have as having completely secured the hon. member's right to raise the matter, but under the circumstances I want the hon. member to co-operate with the Chair in postponing it until the minister can be in his place.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate what you have had to say.

On the two points that I raise I think it would be quite appropriate to wait until the minister returns. In both cases, as you will see from how I have laid it out, they both relate to matters that happened in the House on Thursday and in relation to some documents that were made available to me either on Friday or over the weekend. I wanted to flag them, because this was my first opportunity to do so, but I am sure the Minister of the Environment would want to be here to hear the argument in person.

Mr. Speaker: I appreciate the response of the hon. member.