

These 175 citizens are protesting in particular against the application of the GST to books and periodicals, which they consider an unjustified attack against the most economical and most democratic way of spreading culture. I know that Senator Chaput-Rolland agrees with me in that regard.

[English]

QUESTION PERIOD

ATOMIC ENERGY OF CANADA LIMITED

EFFECT OF LAY-OFFS ON CANADIAN RESEARCH

Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is to the Leader of the Government. Some three weeks ago, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited announced some very serious cuts in staff and, in particular, some affecting my own province, whereby some 114 workers would be laid off and some 16 were to be transferred.

Amongst other things, the AECL research station at Pinawa on the Whiteshell River in Manitoba was doing two particular pieces of research, one of which was the disposal of nuclear waste. This, as my honourable friend will know, is a very serious world problem. My understanding is that Canada was a leader in this field. What was being researched there at that site could have led to some Canadian technology being exported elsewhere, or certainly to some very interesting possibilities for Canada. The other type of research they were doing was on irradiation.

My question to the minister is this: Will the government and AECL be reducing, therefore, their interest in these two areas? Are they transferring the research elsewhere, or are they ceasing the research? What exactly will happen?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I regret that I cannot help my friend on that matter today. I will have to ask the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, Mr. McKnight, for a statement which I will bring in in due course.

[Senator Hébert]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY BILL

MOTION FOR CONCURRENCE IN COMMONS AMENDMENTS

Hon. Donald H. Oliver: Honourable senators, I move that the Senate do now concur in the Commons amendments to Bill S-8.

The Hon. the Speaker: It is moved by the Honourable Senator Oliver, seconded by the Honourable Senator Beaulieu, that the amendments be concurred in now. Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I presume Senator Oliver will explain to us why we should concur in them now. I have to warn him at the outset that my own view is that they should go to committee, but I am prepared to listen.

Senator Oliver: I do have a few remarks that will attempt to explain that, honourable senators.

You may wonder why we are once again dealing with Bill S-8, the Motor Vehicle Safety Act. Honourable senators will recall that Bill S-8 was first tabled in the Senate on March 17, 1992, a year ago, and was examined by the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, chaired at that time by our then honourable colleague Senator Nurgitz. That bill was passed on June 19 of last year with some amendments of a detailed and technical nature.

In the other place, Bill S-8 was referred to the Standing Committee on Transport, which heard from 13 witnesses, the majority concerned with vehicle importation matters. As I understand it, the majority of their concerns are to be the subject of intense discussion at the regulation-making stage. That committee did, however, tinker with the bill in a further way. It made what are essentially two amendments to one clause, namely, clause 7 subsection 2, dealing with the importation provisions of the act.

● (1440)

Both amendments are in large part clarifications of the intent of the act. The first, which is essentially the new wording set out in clause 7(2)(b), clarifies the ability of the government to designate, should it be desirable, certain persons to do the certification of a vehicle after modification. The duties and responsibilities of such a person would be clearly set out in the regulations to be developed by the department in consultation with any interested parties.

The second amendment, a new subclause 4 to clause 7, amends the wording to clarify the intent to require imported vehicles to meet the same standards as Canadian vehicles.