

Routine Proceedings

released by the Minister of the Environment in March 1992.

Question No. 156—Mr. Caccia:

With regards to nuclear electricity generating facilities in Canada, has the government prepared any studies estimating (a) the total cost of decommissioning each of the CANDU nuclear generating plants operating in Canada today (b) the total cost of safely and permanently storing all the spent fuel rods and other radioactive waste and, if so, what are the figures for each of the studies?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Allowances to cover the projected cost for both decommissioning the Canadian nuclear power plants and disposal of the spent fuel are being collected by the provincial utilities through the rates being charged to the customers today. The funds are being accumulated to be available when the expenditures are incurred in the future.

(a) Decommissioning the twenty-two nuclear power generating units that are either operating or under construction in Canada, including the safe and permanent storage of all radioactive wastes other than the spent fuel rods, is estimated to cost approximately \$3.7 billion if the work were to be done today. In fact, the work and expenditure would not begin until the first unit is taken out of service, assumed to be in 2012, and would be spread over many years until the last unit is returned to green pasture in 2072. This decommissioning cost would represent a small fraction of the projected capital of \$34 billion (in 1990 dollars) to replace the 15,700 Mwe of generating capability of these stations, particularly when the effects of discounting are taken into account. Current international estimates for nuclear plant decommissioning fall generally between 10 per cent and 20 per cent of replacement cost.

(b) The reference to "safely and permanently storing all of the spent fuel rods" is interpreted to mean the disposal of nuclear fuel wastes. Atomic Energy of Canada Limited has developed a concept for geological disposal of such wastes. A federal environmental assessment and review of the concept, along with a range of related issues, is currently under way, and an independent panel has been appointed to carry out this public review.

Disposal of spent fuel does present a great uncertainty in terms of nuclear power costs. However, as the panel that conducted the Ontario Nuclear Cost Inquiry noted in its report of January 1989: "The time frame extends well beyond the middle of the century—and means that, although the expenditures will be very large (\$9 billion in 1988) when they are incurred, because of the discounting, they comprise a small portion of the levelized unit energy cost. The funds are being accumulated over the life-time of generating stations and invested over many years so that the charges for this item make up a small portion of the total cost of generating the nuclear-based electricity.

Question No. 160—Mr. Harvard:

What happened to the \$7 million which was allocated for the construction of a Transport Canada hangar at the Winnipeg Airport and which was noted in the Supplementary Estimates B of the fiscal year 1990-91 and in Part III of 1991-92 Main Estimates for Transport Canada?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Although a design has been completed for the construction of a new hangar at Winnipeg, and this item is still included in the Transport Canada capital spending program for the 1991-92 fiscal year, funds have not been allocated for this construction project. The project has been delayed to enable other cost effective options to be evaluated, including the possibilities for sharing facilities with other departments.

Question No. 162—Mr. Stupich:

Was a regional conference held in Whistler, B.C., on June 10, 1991 for economists, sponsored by CEIC in the B.C./Yukon territory region and, if so (a) what was the cost (b) how often are these conferences held?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): A conference of Managers of Regional Economic Services from across Canada was held in the British Columbia/Yukon region in June 1991.

(a) Costs of the conference were:

Air travel \$11,680

Hotel accommodation 5,517

Meals & incidentals 3,294

Other transportation 1,969

Total \$ 22,460