

We are about to hear a statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Jamieson), and I congratulate and applaud him for making the statement in the House. My purpose in raising my point of order is that yesterday, even though the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment (Mr. LeBlanc) was present in the House for the question period, no sooner was the question period concluded than the minister proceeded outside the House to hold a press conference where he made a very important statement regarding the management of our fishery resources in connection with the implementation of the 200 mile economic zone which is to come into effect on January 1 next.

I appreciate your rulings on this, Mr. Speaker; however, I am concerned that your ruling of December 2, and others that you have made, as well as the precedent set by your distinguished predecessor, Speaker Lamoureux, may be tantamount to a licence for ministers to make policy statements outside the House on topical questions that are before the House, thereby depriving members of the opportunity to reply, in the first instance; second, and equally important, it deprives members of an opportunity to question ministers on their statements.

I raise this point of order in sorrow because of the respect I have for the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment. His contemptuous action yesterday was out of character. I regret very much that the minister chose to make the statement outside the House, and I can only commend to him the excellent example being set today by his colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. I am surprised at the hon. member's indignation, when he did not even bother to ask one question on what he called this extremely important announcement of yesterday. It is quite obvious that the hon. member does not listen to his colleague, the hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse), who sits behind him. For weeks now the hon. member for South Shore has been asking questions and I have simply had to say that consultations were going on in regard to this matter, so obviously this was not privileged information of any kind. The document was available to everybody we have been consulting with for the last three months.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Statements by ministers.

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ENERGY

CHANGE IN NUCLEAR EXPORT POLICY

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I wish to announce a change in Canada's nuclear export policy, a matter of central concern to the people and Government of Canada, raising as it does funda-

mental issues affecting world economic growth and world peace.

In this Christmas season our thoughts naturally turn to peace and the brotherhood of man. It is easy to pay tribute to these fundamental goals with words. It is more important that we do so with our actions. It is a challenge to the Government of Canada to respond to the demand of Canadian public opinion that this country exercise its influence toward the betterment of the global society in which we and our descendants must live. In the area of nuclear policy there is no simple answer or it would have long since been adopted. It is rather the need to balance energy requirements, the advance of technology which regardless of what we do will make nuclear capability within the reach of a wider and wider group of countries, and the need to establish a sound international framework which will curb the spread of nuclear weapons and yet take into account the legitimate economic aspirations of sovereign states. I wish to make quite clear, however, that the first priority, indeed the overriding priority, is to prevent the spread of instruments of destruction.

In this context I am pleased to announce that the Canadian government has decided upon a further strengthening of the safeguards requirements which apply to the export of Canadian reactors and uranium. Shipments to non-nuclear weapon states under future contracts will be restricted to those which ratify the Non-Proliferation Treaty or otherwise accept international safeguards on their entire nuclear program. It follows from this policy that Canada will terminate nuclear shipments to any non-nuclear weapon state which explodes a nuclear device.

This requirement is in addition to those outlined in December, 1974. The purpose of the Canadian safeguards policy is simple and straightforward. We wish to avoid contributing to the proliferation of nuclear weapons while at the same time satisfying the legitimate requirements for uranium and technology of countries which demonstrate the intention of restricting Canadian assistance only to peaceful non-explosive uses. Nuclear export policy already requires binding assurances that what Canada provides will not be used for explosive purposes. Existing policy, however, does not cover what a country receives from other suppliers or what it might do on its own. The new policy will close this gap. We will have, therefore, assurance by treaty that Canada's nuclear customers will have been selected from those countries which have made a clear and unequivocal commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The development of the CANDU reactor has been one of Canada's great technological achievements. This technology is needed to reduce the world's dependence on oil. Moreover, our industrialized trading partners look to Canada as a source of uranium to fuel the nuclear reactor programs which they, like ourselves, have undertaken to meet a growing share of energy needs. In the absence of alternative technologies, developing countries will also look to nuclear power once they have exploited other conventional energy resources and have built up the national power grids necessary for large present reac-