

Conservative Party would have set up only a parliamentary inquiry, likely force fed by AECL propaganda and not likely to have come up with truly independent conclusions.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Surely the hon. member must be aware that such an inquiry would have Members of Parliament from his party, the Liberal Party and the Progressive Conservative Party, and have available all the expertise inside and outside of government. That was the intention. I thought I should clear that matter up for the hon. gentleman.

**Mr. Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, I do not withdraw my contention that the decision to set up a parliamentary inquiry into nuclear power by the Progressive Conservative government in 1979 was a way of avoiding the kind of consciousness raising that the public inquiry that I am calling for would have more of a chance of creating.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Blaikie:** If the members of the Progressive party are feeling particularly sensitive this afternoon, I will acknowledge that at the very least they recognized that this was an issue the Canadian people wanted brought within the parameters of political discussion.

As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted by members on both sides of the House, the Liberal Party of Canada, which is the nuclear party par excellence, is that party which has presided over the undemocratic and authoritarian imposition of nuclear power in Canada. It is the party of the technocracy, of those fascinated and captivated by the technological capacity of modern man, and who have forgotten that the goal of human life is not technological, but spiritual, in the sense that human life is to be lived in harmony with each other and with creation, first, and not in reckless, arrogant, and prideful disregard for the human future and/or nature.

Instead, all the Liberal government concedes in this matter is that there is an internal departmental inquiry which, as far as I can make out, never comes to any conclusions because it does not really exist. As the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said in answer to a question asked of him on May 1, 1980, a public inquiry would take too long. The viability of the Canadian nuclear industry cannot withstand scrutiny.

A national referendum on the subject is a necessary third step because we have learned only too well that inquiries by themselves can be interpreted away, or just plain ignored. A well and clearly asked set of questions put to Canadians about their energy future and the various options available, nuclear or non-nuclear, after a public process such as the inquiry I have talked about, would do much to clarify not just the nuclear issue but other issues as well. At the moment the parameters of political debate, and I have spoken about this in the House before, are too confined and too narrow.

Issues such as nuclear power have been seen to be technical, managerial or crudely economic, rather than political in the

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full sense of what it means to be political. This must change for two reasons.

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It must change, of course, in order to improve the quality of the decisions made about these issues so they might become decisions taken in the total context. Second, such issues must become political in order to save politics, that eminently human activity without which we lapse into collective unconsciousness and the friendly fascism of a society in which all significant decisions are made by the executive and its managers, the kind of future the Liberal Party has in mind for Canadians.

Politics is the art—not the science, but the art—of building up the polis and of working together on deciding and constituting the good life for all. The health of our political process, the health of democracy and the relevance of our political process are threatened by the number of issues which the process is not allowed or able to address. We are just now on the verge of giving up much of what is left of the political process to the courts. This may be appropriate; I am not so sure. What I do know is that there will not be much left for politics as such because so much has already been unconsciously conceded to the technocrats and to the bureaucracy.

A referendum on nuclear power would be a step in the right direction. Some people are frightened by referendums. This is understandable. Referendums are not the answer to everything, but in my view something is necessary to break the creeping irrelevance of our political system.

I do not hide the fact that I already have a pretty clear position on nuclear power. I believe the risks associated with nuclear power, such as reactor accidents, the effects of low-level radiation, the perils of nuclear proliferation, the environmental and occupational dangers of uranium mining, the problems of long-term radioactive waste disposal and the longevity associated with all these risks, should lead us to regard nuclear power as a special and unique case, and for this reason we should not proceed with it unless we do so consciously and together after the kind of process I have described.

I would not be happy if Canadians chose a nuclear future, but I want them to be able to choose. The forms of energy which we choose to use involve moral choices now more than ever before. Our moral relationship with nature, with the people of the future, with those who presently live on or around energy resources and with those who will work in the energy-producing processes which we set up—all these relationships are at stake here.

There are difficult trade-offs ahead, but we are not at this time in the dilemma we think we are in and which many would have us believe we are in. Too often we operate on the false premise that we must continue to live the highly energy consumptive life we now live and that we can do this by entrusting our lives to the experts. This is both a false sense of what is important in life and a false faith in our ability to come