

Supply—Atomic Energy Control Board

Mr. Knowles: The minister admitted he was arguing by assertion.

Mr. Brooks: I am sure we are all pleased with the success that has been attained at Chalk River. The minister said a moment ago that they did not exchange information between the United States and Canada, but I notice that the very large plant being set up in the United States corresponds to the plant at Chalk River.

The minister mentioned that this was not a money-making proposition, but he said there were possibilities of dividends now from the sale of isotopes and so on. When I was on the committee I understood the policy was to give isotopes to the hospitals and agricultural organizations. I also recall that businessmen were encouraged to visit the plant and to study just what benefits they could derive from the use of isotopes. Has the policy been changed, or is it still the policy to give isotopes. It is really the sale of plutonium that at cost to hospitals, to agricultural societies and to business organizations?

Mr. Howe: The isotopes are probably sold at cost—at least the isotope business is operating at a deficit at the moment. The reason is we are spending considerable amounts of money in developing items like the cancer bomb and others. Isotopes are given in order to introduce new methods into industry; but after the method is introduced we do not continue to give free isotopes. If the industry uses isotopes in its business operations naturally we expect them to pay for the isotopes. It is really the sale of plutonium that is the revenue producer. I think the revenue last year amounted to something over \$1 million.

Mr. Brooks: I understand you still give them to hospitals free?

Mr. Howe: Well, not free, no. We sometimes give them, but it depends on the isotope. It depends on the amount of development work involved. We have no fixed policy, but we certainly sell isotopes at no more than cost.

Mr. Nowlan: I certainly agree with everything that has been said by others with respect to the value of work being carried on and under the aegis of the minister who has given leadership to it. Later on, when the main estimates are before the house, I might make some remarks with respect to the advisability of concentrating it just in one place. We are simply referring to Chalk River here, I presume. I refer only to that, but I am not going to make any further remarks on it. When the time comes, and when we are dealing with the civilian development, I shall have something to

say about it. This is a very important matter to us in the east and that is probably why we should take more interest in it than the industrially developed parts of Canada, which have other sources of power. I do hope and believe that ultimately the development envisaged here this afternoon by the minister will come about and that it will go a long way towards solving the power problems in the maritimes and in other parts of Canada.

I simply want to re-emphasize the protest which I made before against a similar resolution, namely, that of the Polymer Corporation. The Minister of Finance said that it has been the usual practice. Well, two wrongs do not make a right. Now we are down to the position where we are not giving a dollar. He says the purpose of this vote is to authorize the transfer. How do we repeal it? Do we put a minus sign for a dollar? Do we put in a red sign to repeal this section, Mr. Chairman? We are dealing with something which is of fundamental importance to the economy of this country. Some day this matter will probably be before the courts, and I wonder what the judges will say when they ask for the authority. I ask any lawyer in this house to tell me what they will say. I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, one lawyer who will have a permanent retainer, and it will certainly be a lucrative practice. He is the present incumbent of the finance portfolio, the Minister of Finance. When he becomes D. C. Abbott, Q.C., in private practice, he will be retained by every litigant across Canada, and he will be the only one who will know or who can say what section of a certain supply bill conferred such and such authority, and did such and such a thing, because you will not find it in the statutes, no matter where you look.

Why do we have statutes? Why do we have the principle of enacting statutes, and why has that practice come down through the centuries? Why do we not repeal them all and do it by a supply bill? I am not going to take up any more time on this. The minister says that this is a long and well-established practice, but I am re-emphasizing to my hon. friend that some day he will regret it because ultimately we are going to have to face a situation where you will find you cannot legislate on the basis of a dollar, or \$39 million odd. You have statutes; you may repeal them, you may amend them; but you cannot do it by supply bills.

The Chairman: Shall the item carry?

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): No; I have something to say on this point. I dislike legal points, first of all because I think they are very dull, and second, I am always in danger of getting over my head with sharp shooters