

*Eldorado Nuclear Limited*

that we should not be going ahead without such ability. Since we do not have it, we should not be going ahead.

That concerns just high level radioactive wastes. When you look at the low level radioactive wastes, that is a quantitatively much worse problem because there is more than a hundred million tonnes of such wastes. We have uranium tailings from mines, Eldorado being prominent among them. These tailings are not properly stored. We do not have adequate protection for the public. I have met with people in the Paudach Lake region near Bancroft, Ontario. They have old tailings which have been around for decades, before the AECB insisted on at least some measure of clean-up after the fact. It was not perhaps adequate enough and there is some in storage now, but these old tailings are still there and there has not been adequate containment of them.

That is just one very modest example of inaction on a problem which has been ignored for a long time. A company makes a profit from the mine and the tailings are the responsibility of the public. The taxpayer has to fork over the money to do this. That is precisely what we have in this Bill before us today. This company will be privatized if the Government proceeds with this ill-advised scheme. What happens to the responsibility for waste disposal or waste management for the thousands of years to come? The profits will go to the owners of this company and the responsibility will go to all taxpayers, whether they can afford it or not. It seems to me that this is extremely unfair. It is the public who is left to pay the bill for things which cannot be counted in dollar terms, things such as illness, early death, communities upset by living close to mines or processing facilities. All of those are good reasons to be extremely concerned throughout the process.

I would like to highlight a couple of particular reasons. Of course, much of the product of Eldorado has gone to military use. This supposedly stopped in 1972 because we have an understanding that our uranium will be used only for peaceful purposes. In fact, we have been responsible for some proliferation contrary to our intentions, and there are two major ways in which our uranium goes to military purposes, contrary to our public undertakings. One is in the process of enriching uranium for military purposes and nuclear reactors for the production of electricity. For every six pounds of uranium that is treated in this way, only one pound goes to domestic use and the production of electricity. The five pounds left over, the so-called depleted uranium, can then be used in further processing into plutonium for weapons purposes.

Canada exports uranium from Eldorado mines to France where it goes through this process. The military end product from the so-called depleted uranium in France is tested in the atmosphere, contrary to all our understandings that nuclear weapons should not be exploded in the atmosphere at all. Canada is still doing that and that is the kind of question we should be addressing. Why should we be doing this with this resource? Why should it be used for destruction? Why should it be used in a way that will cause cancer, birth defects and premature death of a large number of people?

I can think of other scandals in the history of Eldorado. It was a major player in the evolution of the uranium cartel in the 1970s to drive up the price of uranium after there had been a drop because of the loss of American markets. This scandalous cartel was protected by some of the worst censorship legislation we have ever seen in this country. We have never had a proper accounting of what happened in that incident. The Government appointed the Bertrand Commission and a report was produced.

Members of the Government, while they were in Opposition, demanded publication of this report because the scandal goes back to the Liberal Government days. The Conservative Government, which protested at the time and demanded the publication of the report, now has the power to act and produce this report in order that we can be a little wiser as to what happened in this period of the uranium cartel. I call on the Government to do that, as have other people. I hope the Government will see the wisdom of coming clean on this information and giving us the full information.

• (1720)

Eldorado Nuclear is involved very substantially in Saskatchewan. The New Democratic Party caucus task force held hearings recently in Saskatoon before which many Saskatchewan environmentalist groups, the mining association, and people on both sides of the issue appeared. One of the major concerns raised there was the plans for uranium mining at Wollaston Lake.

There is a proposal for three new uranium mines to be dug under Wollaston Lake. This is not a very deep lake. It is a very sensitive lake, and it is impossible for people who know that area to imagine how there could be any containment of the uranium to keep it from entering the lake itself. There is, in fact, commercial fishing in this lake which is important to the economy of that region. Yet, plans are still going ahead to permit uranium mining in this extremely environmentally sensitive area.

I must flag again the horror I feel that the alternatives are not being examined. All of this concern is raised when it is theoretical for sustainable development. The federal Government itself has approved the Brundtland Commission report on development and the environment. The Saskatchewan Government and all provincial governments across the country have endorsed those recommendations in principle. Those recommendations say very clearly that damage to the environment must be counted, that the cost must be estimated, and that the costs must be plugged into economic decision-making.

In the case of uranium that means looking very carefully at the costs to the local environment, the health costs, and the long-term waste disposal costs. All of those costs, which are not being taken into account now, must be added into the decision. I suspect that many, if not all, of the decisions to open new mines, to create new facilities, and to increase transformation and so forth, would be economically foolish if