

Oral Questions

anticipate where the nuclear waste will be stored which comes from the Romanian nuclear program? Have there been any discussions between Canada and Romania with respect to the possibility that the nuclear waste would be returned to Canada, or can the minister say that such a proposal has been explicitly ruled out?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I can say categorically that there is no question of any waste which results from the spent fuel in Romania being returned to Canada as part of this arrangement. The answer is absolutely and categorically no. The Romanians will have to deal with their own waste fuel.

I can say, however, that as a result of the manufacturing opportunities inherent in this field, there will be thousands and thousands of jobs created for Canadians.

SALE OF CANDU REACTORS TO ARGENTINA—STAGE OF CONSTRUCTION

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. I presume that this initiative in eastern Europe was for the purpose of opening up new markets for our nuclear technology.

Could I inquire what the situation is with respect to the initiative we took in South America some time ago and, specifically, how matters are proceeding in Argentina? Is the initial reactor close to completion? Is there any progress in settling the misunderstandings that so far have prevented this country and Argentina from proceeding further and, indeed, proceeding further in South America, from the point of view of AECL's first steps in that part of the world?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, answered questions on this particular point last week and gave a progress report in respect of the discussions between Canada and Argentina.

I think it is fair to say that that particular reactor is on schedule, or within a month or two of being on schedule.

Mr. MacKay: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I would suggest to the minister that the report given by his colleague was not very specific and that the impression given by the minister is not the one generally held by people following the situation.

I should like to follow up the question asked by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands and ask the minister directly whether, in view of his latest initiative, when the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce visits the People's Republic of China, as reported earlier in the year, he is going to have a mandate to talk about nuclear technology with that country.

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows perfectly well that if he has a question for the Minister of

[Miss MacDonald.]

Industry, Trade and Commerce, that question should be put to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

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CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

SALES OF GRAIN TO CHINA

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I put a question to the Minister of Transport—who is also supposed to be in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board—in view of yesterday's announcement about the United States establishing full diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China.

Reports indicate that this will mean greatly increased commercial opportunities for the United States in general, and particularly with respect to grain sales, including an additional three million to six million tonnes that could otherwise be bought from Canada.

What action does the minister and the government intend to take to increase our capacity to transport grain from the prairies to west coast ports, so that the Canadian Wheat Board will not be left in the present position of not tendering for further contracts with China because of lack of sufficient rail capacity to handle additional sales?

● (1422)

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the question of the capacity to handle grain was considered at a meeting of the senior transportation committee last week and certain steps are being taken in that regard. The existing elevator terminals at Vancouver are adding a total of about ten millions bushels of storage space.

The hon. member knows that we are determined to see that a significant increase in capacity occurs at Prince Rupert so that by the early mid-1980s we can handle a lot more grain there.

His reference to the relationship between United States and China should not be left untouched in view of the fact that Canada long ago recognized the Chinese government. I am sure that will stand our relationship, in terms of the grain trade with them, in very good stead; and perhaps even more than that, the Canadian Wheat Board is alert to maintaining the good relationship which it established by having negotiations and transactions with China even before recognition was given by Canada.

Mr. Benjamin: I am glad the minister said what he did about our trading relationship with China in view of the fact that on November 7, and again on December 7, the minister advised the House, in response to my questions, that CPR had maintained it had enough equipment to handle the projected grain movement and it is now obvious that CPR misled the minister and has caused him to mislead the House, because on December 5 CPR wrote to the Canadian Wheat Board saying