

to Canada, and I am sure further embarrassment to the many loyal and dedicated people employed by AECL, some 6,000 in number.

• (1520)

The annual report indicates that there has been 25 years of nuclear progress. More appropriately, it has been a résumé of 25 years of nuclear fallout. The 1977 year of operation represents a \$290 million drain on the taxpayers of Canada. We on this side wonder how many more disciplinary actions, how many more royal commissions, how many more royal inquiries do we need to bring out the sheer incompetence and mismanagement of this government? We have had example upon example of the denial of ministerial responsibility, examples of flip-flops, examples of stonewalling, gross examples of incompetence and waste by this administration. Surely, the time has come when the taxpayers of Canada can no longer tolerate the mismanagement and waste of public funds. Surely, the corruption which surrounds this whole fiasco must be stopped.

According to the minister's statement this afternoon, Dr. Foster has been fired for running a Crown corporation at a loss. If this is true, it makes him a remarkable individual, virtually unique in Canadian history. It is incredible in the full sense of the word because AECL has always lost money. Every year over the past decade it has managed to lose close to half a billion dollars. No one was fired and no one was even reprimanded. Now, we are told that Dr. Foster has been fired for incompetence in managing the financial affairs of AECL. It is truly amazing. That seems to be a mere trifle compared to the reasons for which Dr. Foster was not fired. He was not fired for stonewalling the Public Accounts Committee for nearly nine months. He was not fired for making totally unaccountable payments of \$18.3 million. He was not fired for forgetting to check whether Shaul Eisenberg had performed any of the services he claimed he performed in the Korean deal. He was not fired for sitting on a billing of nearly \$20 million for nearly a year without taking any effective action. He was not fired for his professed ignorance about the identity of the Argentine agent, despite the fact that when he was vice-president it was his division that was clearly concerned and directly responsible for that particular negotiation.

This afternoon we were told by the minister that the Cordoba nuclear station in Argentina is going to experience a loss of approximately \$130 million, in spite of the negotiations of the minister which we were told saved some \$70 million or \$80 million. Three or four months ago the minister indicated that the loss was going to be in the order of \$25 million. Whom are we to believe? Dr. Foster was not fired for his role in that particular area. According to the minister, he was fired for doing what every president of AECL has done, and that is running the financial affairs of AECL incompetently.

We on this side of the House find the minister's reasoning very hard to swallow. There are just too many coincidences involved in this whole fiasco. Coincidence No. 1—the RCMP have been investigating the deals related to the Argentine and

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South Korean negotiations for the past seven months. Surely, the report must be almost ready. Coincidence No. 2—the report of the Public Accounts Committee on its investigation into this sordid affair should be on its way to completion soon.

It is interesting to note that it is Dr. Foster, and not the chairman, Ross Campbell, who is carrying the can for AECL's spectacular financial incompetence. What about the role of the chairman in this whole fiasco? He was asked to come in and straighten out the affair. Is he going to be the next one to go? Will it be the minister? These are perfectly legitimate questions to which we require answers.

Last December the *Globe and Mail* editorialized this situation in this manner: "It is time for straight answers". We on this side of the House want to have some straight answers. I take it from the answer of the Solicitor General (Mr. Fox) this afternoon that he has not yet received the report of the RCMP. Has he received an interim report? When will we receive it? Is he going to present the report to the Public Accounts Committee? When can we expect it? Were any funds channelled back into Canadian hands as a result of these deals? What exactly did Eisenberg do for AECL, especially in light of the statements made by senior Korean electric officials that they had never met the man or his associates? Is the minister or his predecessor constitutionally responsible for this action? What action is being taken against the former president of AECL, namely Lorne Gray, who was the perpetrator of this mess?

Finally, in view of the rear guard action this government appears to have been waging against those who want to get to the bottom of the affair, is the government interested in knowing who got the \$2½ million in slush money which went to some unknown agent in Argentina? The efforts to get to the bottom of the under-handed dealings of AECL, which surround the sale of CANDU reactors to South Korea and Argentina, have been stymied, hampered and stonewalled by this government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: The government, the minister and his predecessors have been less than forthcoming in their evidence before the committee. They have been less than aggressive and obviously reluctant to ascertain who was responsible for these substantial sums of money which we suggest are tantamount to a bribe.

We want to know why the minister has approved, under section 70(1) of the Financial Administration Act, the operating budget of the corporation for the year in question. Does the minister now consider himself to be responsible for this mismanagement? More importantly, does the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) consider the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie) to be responsible for this mess? We should like to know why the estimates of \$408 million were rammed through this House for the next financial year when the Auditor General clearly warned that AECL is not financially competent. Financial control and management were weak and ineffective, and in many cases, grossly inadequate.