

Oral Questions

National Energy Board, along with my colleagues, and the recommendations of the ministers involved.

Mr. Blackburn: Madam Speaker, I thank the Prime Minister for answering the first question put to him today in the House.

REQUEST FOR GUARANTEES RESPECTING EMISSION CONTROL DEVICES

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): I have a supplementary question for the Minister of the Environment. In view of the fact that hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent by the special committee on acid rain, in view of the petition that was circulated in this House, in view of the incredible work that the Department of External Affairs has been trying to do in Washington, and in view of the fact that we have been making steady progress in getting friends in the U.S. House and Senate, will the minister assure the House that before Ontario Hydro is allowed to enter into any agreement with the New Jersey Power Corporation he will make sure that Ontario Hydro guarantees, in writing, to put scrubbers in place on all stacks at Nanticoke generating station, or equivalent technology, that will reduce and, we hope, eliminate the sulphur coming out of the smoke stacks?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of the Environment and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the recommendation of the National Energy Board will come before cabinet for discussion. Clearly, I cannot tell him what the decision of cabinet will be before it has been taken. The views of the Department of the Environment were presented to the National Energy Board and are well known. I know of no reason to change them at the present time.

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● (1440)

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

URANIUM PRICE FIXING TRIAL—PROSECUTION OF URANIUM CANADA LIMITED

Mr. Chris Speyer (Cambridge): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. If one of the main purposes of criminal law is to punish individuals or corporations when, after due process, they are found guilty of an offence, how can the minister justify the prosecution and possible punishment of a shell corporation such as Uranium Canada, which has absolutely no assets, and which, for all practical purposes, is the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and the senior staff?

In addition, the maximum fine in the event of a finding of guilt is \$1 million. Who would pay that fine? Would it be a new form of transfer payment from the President of the Treasury Board to the province of Ontario which collects fines?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development): Madam Speaker, in this matter, I followed the recommendations I was given by Commissioner Bertrand and his legal advisers who decided in favour of prosecuting the companies that allegedly conspired to fix the price of uranium in Canada. So I took Mr. Bertrand's report and accepted his recommendations, and we put the Crown corporations and the private companies on the same footing. We were entirely justified in doing so because, a few weeks or months before that, the Ontario Court of Appeal handed down a decision that Crown corporations could be prosecuted before the courts in Canada in matters of this kind.

[English]

JUSTIFICATION FOR PROSECUTION

Mr. Chris Speyer (Cambridge): The minister is insulting the intelligence of everyone in this room today. He is the chief law officer of the Crown, so how can a prosecution possibly be initiated against a corporation with absolutely no assets and no way of paying a fine? It would be nothing more than a book entry between the federal and provincial governments, so how do you justify it? Don't cop-out.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development): Madam Speaker, there was a corporation involved. When the Bertrand report said we should prosecute private and public corporations, we did not look in the books of every corporation before prosecuting. If that were the case, Madam Speaker, the hon. member would have said, "why didn't you prosecute?" We cannot presume there will be a fine because we do not know the result. If the court decides they should be fined, it will be a problem that the corporation will have to face at that time. As Minister of Justice I have done my duty, which is to prosecute—

Mr. Clark: And hide everything you can.

Mr. Chrétien: —the corporation according to the recommendations of the Bertrand report. That is exactly what I have done. On top of that, to make sure that the views of the Bertrand report would be seen in the best light possible in front of the court, I decided to hire the same lawyer that Mr. Bertrand had selected.

CROWN CORPORATION DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister and deals with the situation where the other four corporate defendants in this uranium cartel case have requested that Uranium Canada and Eldorado Nuclear turn over to them documents in their possession for purposes of a full and fair defence. This request has been refused by the Crown corporations, which will mean that the corporate defendants' defence is going to be prejudiced. Will the Prime Minister direct the Crown corporations to