

Nuclear Control and Administration

Also I should like to pay tribute to the tremendous research which has been done in the medical field of the nuclear industry. It has been fantastic. That fact has been overshadowed by the criticism perpetuated among the general public and is quite often overlooked. I know that the Hon. Member for Bruce-Grey (Mr. Gurbin), whose constituency and name was brought into this debate by the Hon. Member for Hillsborough, would certainly be among those to agree that a great deal of good work, particularly in the medical field, through nuclear research was done. Also I know that the Hon. Member for Hillsborough brought in the Bill with good intent and with principle. I do not question his good intent or his principles because all of us agree that while we go ahead and develop nuclear energy, there are positive things in medical research that go along with it. Yes, research into the handling of the waste side of the industry must be faced up to. A great deal of work has already gone into this area and is continuing into the research of handling the waste products of the industry. I am not negative about the future because necessity is always the mother of invention and development. I have confidence in the scientific expertise and common sense of the people in the nuclear industry today. They have done their best to produce good regulations through the AECB. I have faith that they will use good judgment. They are not going out to destroy our children's children or their children's children. Also, in closing I would like to emphasize—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order. I must inform the Hon. Member that his time is exhausted.

Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody): Mr. Speaker, I was about to offer the Hon. Member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke (Mr. Hopkins) an opportunity to finish his sentence, but he indicated that he did not want to take this opportunity and that he felt he had been sentenced long enough. I would like to congratulate him for a most reassuring speech. I, too, would like to confirm that the people who work in the nuclear industry in research and various forms of it are not necessarily conspirators to poison us all forever. I think there are some well motivated people within that industry. I think the whole industry is a high tech turkey, but that does not mean the people who work in it are not well motivated.

• (1750)

I think we got into the nuclear industry for very many good reasons. Canada had the technology, the brains and the uranium. We got into this industry after World War II because it seemed like a reasonable thing to do. Ever since that time we have been throwing good money after bad and trying to recoup an investment for something that is suffering from terminal, if not moral economics. I do not share the same confidence in the nuclear regulatory agencies, whether they are in this country or any other country; the United States, Soviet Union, France, or wherever, that is held by the Hon. Member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. Simply because I feel that citizens of this world have been systematically lied to about the dangers of even low-level radiation for the last 50 years. We have not yet achieved the competence to look at the tonnes and tonnes of nuclear waste. If the Hon. Member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke is confident, that is terrific. I do

not share his view. I think that all of us, and this is the essence of democracy, should probe into what our governments tell us and not believe everything we are told whether by a Government, a regulatory agency, a Crown corporation or whatever. It is absolute naivete for any of us to be that confident in what a group of men, who may have a stake in the nuclear industry, tell us about anything. That is my view. If it sounds cynical, I am sorry. But I happen to feel that way because I think life on this planet in terms of how we dispose of nuclear waste or what we do with nuclear weapons, nuclear power, or nuclear research, is too precious to leave in the hands of a bunch of bureaucrats appointed by the Government who have no reason that I know of to make a clean breast of things.

I think others have noted that this Bill is very similar to the one put forward by the Hon. Member for Bruce-Grey (Mr. Gurbin), a colleague for whom I have the utmost respect. His views on nuclear power are not necessarily congruent with my own. My own position and the position of my Party was set forward, I thought, very well by the Hon. Member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) on December 17 at the time when the Hon. Member for Bruce-Grey debated his Private Member's Bill. The Hon. Member for Vancouver-Kingsway and, I believe the Hon. Member for Hillsborough (Mr. McMillan) also said that at this time Canadians would welcome a serious debate on this whole issue of what Canada's commitment to the nuclear industry is, whether it is nuclear weapons, nuclear power or nuclear medical research.

In any event, these sister Bills have been brought forward by the Conservatives to ensure more accountability. We can support that. We are in favour of more accountability. I think that is important. I can support, in principle, some of the proposed changes. I can support tighter regulations on the transportation of radioactive materials. When we had evidence in the Standing Committee on Transport about unsafe cargo or dangerous goods, I was surprised, appalled and even shocked to learn that sometimes when I return to Ottawa from my riding on the West Coast I am sitting blindly and naively above canisters of nuclear material that are being transported on the same plane. That is not particularly reassuring, not that it would matter one way or the other to me if the plane went down. We still do not know about the technology of shielding or the effect of low-level radiation. We are just beginning to understand that. Witness the story about the people in the Armed Services who were involved in the clean-up of the two spills in Chalk River during or shortly after the Second World War. People like Bjorne Paulson are attempting to get some kind of pension because he suffered cancer as a result of taking part, without adequate shielding, in that clean-up at Chalk River. There are at least 20 to 50 other radiated veterans who are crying desperately for some kind of help from the Government, especially from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I can support tighter regulation in transport. I can support reductions in the ability of the Government to hide nuclear questions behind a secret wall by way of saying, "These are for