

Candu Reactor Sales

● (1720)

We are all too well aware of the disruptive effect which the uneven distribution of our natural energy resources has on provincial relations. The transportation of coal, gas or oil from our western provinces to the industries of the east represents a formidable challenge when compared with a nuclear economy in which a single truckload of fuel will keep a plant in operation for a whole year. Uranium not only is found in most parts of Canada but its ready transportability can assist us in moving towards equality of energy pricing across the country. The cost of a nuclear kilowatt differs very little whether it is generated in the maritimes or the heartland of Ontario. I hope hon. members on the Conservative side noticed the term "kilowatt"—it has always been the measurement in this industry.

The Candu nuclear power stations built by Ontario Hydro have already saved more than \$1 billion in foreign exchange and by 1990 that figure will have grown to \$16 billion.

The hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway last week complained in this debate that Atomic Energy of Canada refuses to give out information. At page 2054 of *Hansard* for June 12, he is reported as follows:

Atomic Energy of Canada seems to feel that it is above participation, that it is above inquiry. If anyone wants to ask a question of Atomic Energy of Canada, any interested groups of citizens, we hear the reply that Atomic Energy of Canada will not participate, nor will it give us information.

I would ask the hon. member where he was when AECL had a display in room 200 in the West Block. He could have got all the information he wanted there. I would also refer him to the annual report of AECL where he would have found the financial statement he asks for, as well as all the information on waste management, etc.

As an existing and proven alternate energy, nuclear power can make a significant contribution to the over-all energy supply which is a prerequisite for economic growth in Ontario and in Canada as a whole.

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I take part in this debate for the production of papers from AECL with some degree of interest. I have read the motion, of course, and I want to say that not only do I agree with the call that all documents—notes, minutes, correspondence and other communications from AECL during the months of June, July, August, and September, 1979—be made available to the House of Commons, but I would call for all documents from AECL going back for a period of years and right up to the present time.

I should like to see the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) broaden his outlook a little and realize that this company, a Crown corporation, in the final analysis has to be answerable to this House of Commons through a minister of the Crown. It should be only too happy to make the documents available and the hon. member should be very forthright in encouraging it to do so.

I had the feeling, however, that in putting forward his motion the hon. member for Vaudreuil was doing more than

just asking for the documents for a certain period of time. In reality I think he was indulging in that game that so many members of the government benches seem to be playing these days—that is, kite flying for the government. In his case it is a game of kite flying on behalf of the government to forward a policy—to endorse and push a policy of lowering the safeguards policy on sales abroad of nuclear equipment by AECL on behalf of Canada. That seems to be the goal that he and other members have in mind.

One has only to look at the current negotiations with Argentina for a good example of this. The hon. member for Vaudreuil raised that question when he spoke. He advocated, of course, further sales of Candu reactors to Argentina even though that country is not a member of the non-proliferation treaty nations, has not signed the non-proliferation treaty nor has it agreed to Canada's full scope safeguards. It is a country which is in no way prepared to meet the kinds of standards Canada has set for itself in trying to be an example to other countries of how to contain the proliferation of nuclear explosions around the world.

I imagine that if we were to get the papers from AECL down to the present day—and I hope the hon. member will endorse that suggestion—we might find that in the present deliberations between AECL, ministers of the Crown and government officials from Argentina somehow or other there will be a write-off of the mounting debt of AECL on its construction of the Embalco plant in Cordoba province. We have already absorbed a \$130 million loss on that and now there is the potential of another \$30 or \$40 million loss. In order to get a write-off and relieve the Canadian government of that kind of additional debt, we have somehow or other fiddled around with the safeguards that the previous Liberal government had established and that the Conservative party had endorsed.

It was not always that way with the Liberal government. There were those previously who took a very strong and courageous stand—ministers who had the courage to introduce, defend and enlarge the number of countries who would abide by the standards of safeguards that we put into effect. When the Hon. Don Jamieson was secretary of state for external affairs, he introduced safeguards on December 27, 1976. At page 2256 of *Hansard* for that date, he said:

While the Canadian government recognizes the legitimate energy requirements of its trading partners, it is determined to do everything within its power to avoid contributing to nuclear weapons proliferation. It is for this reason that the Government of Canada has unilaterally decided to strengthen further Canada's safeguards requirements.

Perhaps the hon. member for Vaudreuil would pay particular attention to the next passage. Mr. Jamieson said:

As in the past we are prepared to accept the commercial consequences of being clearly ahead of other suppliers. This is the price we are prepared to pay to curb the threat to mankind of nuclear proliferation.

That was the kind of courageous stand that was taken by a former Liberal secretary of state for external affairs. I wonder how many on that side of the House take that stand today. Certainly when the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) was in opposition he had some questions about such a stand, and now