

*Adjournment Debate*

I asked the minister in my letter to him on July 5 if he would outline precisely what steps were anticipated by the government with respect to the establishment of this refinery. I am sorry to say that the response to my letter was in the most general terms. The minister indicated to me at that time that we could expect a decision about the site within a matter of weeks. A number of months have passed and there has been no indication of any selection process.

● (2220)

I think the government has a lot to answer for, and also the provincial NDP government whose representatives have been howling since I raised this matter in this House. They claim it is a matter of playing politics, but I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, I am not playing on this issue. People are concerned and they have a right to know. This is not wartime when we might be worried about the atomic bomb. People have the right to know about the kind of facility being put next to a large area of population. If the plant is going to be as safe as the spokesman for Eldorado says it is going to be, if it will be as safe as the minister has indicated, then why are they holding back and not tabling all the environmental impact studies? Why are they not telling us exactly what kind of studies are going on? Why do they not tell us what sites are being considered other than the one in Warman, which was only found out because a Conservative MLA stumbled across the information that they were picking up options through the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation in that particular area? We have no idea of what other sites are being considered.

No information has been given to us by either level of government about their intentions. In other words, it is another case of the government in its usual and continuing arrogant manner knowing what is best for the people in the various regions and areas of our country and not practising the participatory democracy that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) talked about in 1968—not allowing people to make well informed decisions on the basis of information provided by the government. I think this kind of example does more to show the necessity for a freedom of information act than many other examples that I could quote. It is lack of information in cases like this that shows how we need a freedom of information act which would provide an independent tribunal to decide whether information was properly withheld from the people of the country.

I take very strong exception to the kind of flim-flam, delay, and evasion practised by this government—and by the provincial government as well. I should not place all the blame on the federal government. It seems to me, however, that if these governments persist in this particular attitude they will suffer

serious consequences in Saskatoon and the surrounding areas in future elections.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Maurice Dupras (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, in reference to the question of the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Hnatyshyn) of October 22, now I understand why a representative of the department of industry and commerce in the Saskatchewan provincial government said of him that he is either misleading his constituents or is misinformed. Of course he is uninformed if he does not know what the government is doing.

I will read it again for the hon. member because he does not seem to remember what was contained in that press release.

Gordon Burton, director of Corporate Affairs for the company, said the purpose of the the options is to allow Eldorado Nuclear to conduct detailed environmental and engineering studies of the site to determine whether it would be suitable for a refinery.

It is emphasized that the company has not yet made a decision to proceed, Mr. Burton said. This decision is dependant on many factors, not the least of which is the assurance of a supply of concentrates from proposed new mines in the northern part of the province.

**He went on, Mr. Speaker:**

The environmental studies as well as a large amount of other data will—if they support a decision to proceed—be made public before any construction begins.

I wonder if the hon. member is paying attention? Mr. Burton added:

Indeed, the environmental impact statement is subject, under government legislation, to public hearings.

If the hon. member had read page 3 of the same press release he would have noted that the Eldorado office in Saskatoon hopes to begin within the next several months a general information program on the nature of uranium exploration, mining and refining.

The same press release also speaks of a new refinery in Ontario. For instance it says on page 2:

Plans have been announced for a new refinery in Ontario to begin production by 1980, and the company now is examining the feasibility of another refinery in Saskatchewan.

There is no wartime-like secrecy surrounding this press release and I think the provincial minister of industry and commerce, Mr. Messer, is correct. I think the hon. member is misleading his constituents.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** That is not correct.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until two o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10:28 p.m.